

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय
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BETWEEN THE HEATHER AND THE NORTHERN SEA

BY

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Dedicated

TO MY FRIEND OF MANY YEARS AND MUCH

LOYALTY,

ELINOR J. H. MILES.

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hurried to the doorway. 'Can you send it to the post at once, please? My father will be obliged if you can. It is important.'

More than one volunteer stepped forward, winning gracious thanks, and smiles that were found to be bewildering, even in remembrance. The white figure disappeared with her lamp. The amazed group sat in silence a little while; and when conversation began again it was carried on in a curiously subdued manner. The stranger's wonderful beauty, her grace, her exquisitely musical voice and accent, had left a unity of impression that was at least conducive to social harmony.

CHAPTER II.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

Festus. He wrote a poem.

Student. What was said of it?

Festus. Oh, much was said—much more than understood.

One said that he was mad, another wise;

Another wisely mad.

Student. And what said he of such?

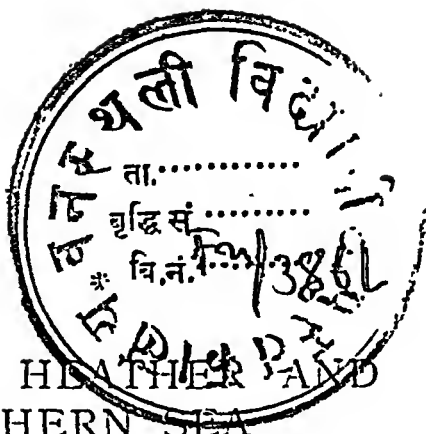
Festus. He held his peace.'

P. J. BAILEY.

THE upstairs parlour to which the young lady returned was undoubtedly the best inn's best room; yet it was a little dingy, a little tawdry. But the lamplight did not emphasize its tawdriness, and there was even an air of comfort about the fireside. A big coal fire blazed in the old-fashioned grate; the tea-table was drawn near it; the ancient three-cornered armchairs looked very hospitable.

One of the chairs was occupied. A gentleman sat there who was apparently either sad or very weary; it might be that he was both.

His clasped hands dropped listlessly from the arm of his chair, his eyes were fixed dreamily on the fire, and an air of unconscious abstraction hung about him, seeming as if it were the outcome of his natural and permanent tone of mind rather than of any passing mood.



BETWEEN THE HEATHER AND THE NORTHERN SEA

CHAPTER I.

AT THE BLACK SWAN.

'Yet earth saw one thing, one how fair !
One grace that grew to its full on earth :
Smiles might be sparse on her cheeks so spare,
And her waist want half a girdle's girth,
But she had her great gold hair.'
ROBERT BROWNING.

'Has tha seen yon woman, Isaiah ?'

'Whya no. Ah'll nut saäy 'at Ah've clearly seen her, Peter ;
but Ah've heerd tell on her.'

'What, already ?'

'Ay, already. They were talkin' on her doon at Reuben's, as
Ah com' by. Foälks seem puzzled-like.'

'At that Ah doän't wunder, Isaiah. Things *is* puzzlin'.'

'Soä 'twould seem. . . . She's despart grand-lookin'—hes a
turn o' the head like a princess, they saäy. An' 'twas added 'at
the man was old, an' seemed of a commoner sort, an' carried
hisself in a humbler manner.'

'Ay, so he does, but he's no common man. Anyways, Ah'm
mista'en if he is.'

'You seed 'em, then ?'

'Ay, but 'twere nobbut a flash like, as they went along t'

rapidly assimilated modern ideas. 'Yes, that is entirely true. It is his want of self-assertion that has left him in the shade. No man comes to the front without it in these days. If one cannot assert one's self, one must at least have friends to do the asserting. The latter is the more dignified way, but it is slower, and considerably less certain.'

So far as Noel Bartholomew was concerned, this was only a small part of the truth. Other causes than lack of the power of self-laudation had tended to keep him from the forefront of the time. The world that talked so much of the man, and assumed such intimate knowledge of him, of his life, and of his work, would, if the truth could have been laid bare, have been surprised to find that after all it had known nothing, that it had interested and amused itself sorely by conjecture.

The first thing experience of life had really taught him was the value of silence concerning the greater facts of his life. He had acquired the gift, he had found that it cost him friends, and he had also found that it was a cause of misunderstanding. Nevertheless, he had proved its wholesomeness.

'Fine aspirations, generous convictions, purposes, they are thought very fine; but it is good on various accounts to keep them rather silent, strictly unvoiced, except on call of real business, so dangerous are they for becoming conscious of themselves. Most things do not ripen at all except underground. And it is a sad but sure truth, that every time you speak of a fine purpose, especially if with eloquence, and to the admiration of bystanders, there is the less chance of your ever making a fact of it in your poor life.'

So Carlyle had written, so Bartholomew had thought long before, and as he lived the thought deepened to conviction. Thus it came to pass that if his work failed to appear, the world had only its own reason why; and when it did appear, it was not always so clearly understood as it might have been if the man's artistic principles had been better comprehended.

It was granted that his work was original—that was the drawback of it—an atmosphere of criticism, a taint of doubt, hangs about all true originality. Only the determinedly persistent keep on undaunted.

'Thoo can talk fast anuff when there's neä 'casion,' said Isaiah, as Leah put down his third glass of ale with a bang that sent part of its contents flying across the table.

'Then Ah'd better keep my talk till 'casion comes,' retorted the girl, darting in and out amongst the group for the empty glasses which she should have refilled ten minutes ago.

The confusion was increasing rapidly.

'Thoo forgits 'at mah sixpence is as good as ony fine laüdy's sixpence 'at iver was coined,' said one who had waited thirstingly.

'Tell us what they call her, Leah?' said another. 'An' Ah'll bring tha a fairin' fra Birkan Brigg.'

Suddenly—very suddenly—there was an instant silence, an instant cessation of other things than sound. Every head was turned in one direction, pipes were removed from the smokers' lips, and glasses were replaced noiselessly on the table. A singular unanimity of expression, both in countenance and attitude, came over the little assemblage. It seemed more than mere surprise, mere admiration.

The cause of all this was only a girl who stood there in the doorway of the inn kitchen, shrinking a little from the general gaze; a tall, white, graceful figure, holding a lamp a little above her head, so that the light fell full upon her face.

No one there had ever dreamed that such a face could be. It was very pale, very pure, faultless in outline as a cameo. The richly curved mouth smiled a little, as if some words had been overheard. The eyes smiled, too—they were large dark eyes, keen, observant, yet liquid, lovely, and intent with human lovingness. They were deeply set, and looked deeper for the overshadowing of the heavy, shining, pale gold hair—hair of the kind that looks richer for any confusion it may be in. Altogether there was about her that rare look of superior organization which we name distinction. Her dress was consistent, and the air of picturesque carelessness with which it was worn took nothing from its inherent becomingness. Her wide-brimmed velvet hat with its creamy feathers was pushed away from her forehead, her long paletot of rich white fur was open at the throat. Apparently the girl had had no time to take off her travelling attire.

'It is only this letter,' she said, speaking to Leah, who had

When the rain came down it came with fury, beating in passionate gusts on the canvas cover of the waggon, dropping in streamlets over the front on to the poor old driver, who strove to cheer on his horses with all the energy that was left to him. He had lighted a big horn lantern, and it swung from the top of the waggon, throwing fitful gleams of light here and there upon the wet horses, upon the dripping reins, upon old Luke's watch as he looked at it silently from time to time. Outside in the visible darkness it seemed as if strange forms were passing; now a wan silent face, and now a street of a silent dream-like city.

So the hours went by. One by one the miles were overpassed. The rain ceased, began again. the wind went on wuthering* wildly, sobbing, raging, plaining over the barren moor that was so indisputably its own domain.

At last the waggon made a sharp turn.

'There!' the old man shouted. 'We're goin' doon t' Raven-gates noo. We'll be at t' Haggs by nine o'clock.'

'Is it moor all the way?' asked Genevieve, lifting her tired head, and trying to speak so that she should not seem tired at all.

'Yes, dear; Hunsgarth Haggs is the first house we come to when the edge of the moor is passed.'

The girl's head did not droop again. 'At that house there will be rest,' she said to herself, 'and there will be light and warmth, shelter, and refuge from the storm . . . So ends the overture.'

CHAPTER V.

MISS CRAVEN.

'Good my lords,
I am not prone to weeping, as our sex
Commonly are; the want of which vain dew,
Perchance, shall dry your pities; but I have
That honourable grief lodged here, which burns
Worse than tears drown.'

The Winter's Tale.

'DEFENCE, not defiance,' whispered Genevieve, as her father lifted her down from the shaft of the waggon.

* Wuthering, an expressive Yorkshire term for the sound of the wind on the heights.

It may be said at once that he was a man of note among such as understood, and noticeable in his way ; but people were seldom impressed at first sight of him. Some openly confessed to disappointment, and the damaging epithet 'commonplace' was uttered with a finality of tone from which there seemed no appeal. All the same the epithet was misleading.

Confessing by negatives, he was not handsome, nor was he tall, nor had he any commanding personality that could be discerned without occasion. Yet the man's thought-furrowed face, his broad firm brow, his expression of a keen if somewhat visionary intellectuality, were things not to be passed over if you wished to read his character from such outward and visible signs as it had impressed upon him.

It has been said that he was a noted man ; this must be qualified, and it can only be qualified by a paradox.

Noel Irving Bartholomew was known through the length and breadth of the art world of England—nay, beyond this limit—as an artist who was comparatively unknown, that is to say, comparing his public recognition with his recognised genius. He had made his mark distinctively at thirty years of age. He was now nearly fifty, and the outer world was waiting yet for the masterpiece which was to place him, not amongst the immortals—there were those who judged him placed there already—but amongst the fortunate few who are, even in their own day, honoured alike of the critic, the connoisseur, and the utterly uncultivated.

It was some provoking perversity in the man, so it was said, that prevented him doing full justice to his own genius: some lack of the force that springs of ambition, or some incomprehensible indifference to his rightful place in the world's estimate.

All this was known to Noel Bartholomew ; something more than this was understood of him.

One day a lady who had seen him at his own studio at Kensington was speaking of him to a younger and more fashionable artist. The lady praised the older man—praised him for the noble work he had done, for the unassuming way in which he spoke of it, for the beautiful absence of self-assertion observable in the man himself.

'Ah, yes !' said the young man, speaking out of his store of

'How are you?' he asked; 'and your father and mother, how are they?'

'They're much as usual.'

'And you think it is not worth while to answer my inquiry about yourself? That is true. And I have so many inquiries to make. But we will have some tea first, please. Genevieve, this used to be my favourite armchair. Let me see how you look in it?'

The girl sank into the chair with unmistakable weariness as Miss Craven disappeared to fetch the tea.

'Let me take your hat off, dear,' said her father, raising her head gently; then he unfastened her cloak. She had a pale-red dress underneath, a soft, warm-coloured, clinging cashmere, with creamy lace about the throat and wrists.

'I feel too stupid to care for a little disorder to-night,' she said, giving a tired glance at herself.

'But disorder is the order of the day. You are not going to forget London ways so soon?'

'No: I am going to forget nothing. I am going to add to my store of memories. By the way, I like this room. I wish we were going to stay here.'

Fortunately for Genevieve this last remark was overheard by Miss Craven, who was entering the room with tea, toast, warm cake, ham and eggs. She was proud of the old parlour. There were samplers hanging on the painted panels; rosettes of satin ribbon, white and green and blue, each with a ticket to it, framed and glazed and hanging over the fireplace. These, Genevieve learnt later, were evidences that once upon a time prize cattle had been reared at Hunsgarth Haggs. Poor old Craven had been as proud of them as a soldier of his Victoria Cross, or a curate of his silver teapot. Not the best picture that ever was painted could have given half the satisfaction that these scraps of satin ribbon had given.

A few of Mr. Bartholomew's sketches of twenty years ago hung on either side, but the general opinion of the neighbourhood had gone so decidedly against them, that even Miss Craven hardly cared to have them hanging there. They were water-colours, little ethereal impressions of mist, light, colour, and unusual effects of

Most men had blamed Bartholomew : there was hardly one to understand.

'There are artists with half his talent who are making money as fast as if they were coining it,' said a gentleman who was admiring one of Bartholomew's pictures : it hung on the wall of one of the finest studios in London.

The owner of the studio paused a moment.

'Are you sure that Bartholomew has any talent at all?' he asked.

The visitor understood.

'You mean that he has genius? Granted, but why, then, does he turn it to so little practical use?'

'Is pure genius, *sans* talent, of practical use to anybody?' asked the artist, knowing the thing he spoke of. 'Is it not rather a tyrannous thing, oft enough blind in its tyranny, cruel in its imperiousness? A man who is blessed with it, if blessing it be, can do no other than obey it. He must obey, do the thing he is moved to do, or he must do nothing. It is talent that can do as it will, that can foresee, calculate, make certain that every step is a step onward. Noel Bartholomew is a fool in the estimation of men of talent.'

There were times, and they recurred often, when he was a fool in his own estimation.

It was only natural that as he sat there in the dingy parlour of the Yorkshire inn some grave thoughts should beset him. His daughter, who sat at his feet, with her fair shining head resting upon his knee, refrained from trying to distract his thoughts.

Let him think, let him grieve; he would turn to her for comfort when he wanted it.

There was no one else to comfort him now. Three years ago, just when the world had begun to see some possibility of his doing himself justice at last, his wife had died. She had gone from him suddenly, and the shock had overpowered him so grievously that his friends had despaired of his full return to life and the work of life. They saw no reason yet for being sanguine. It was at their instance that he was about to try what change of scene would do.

This was not the change they had desired for him; but here he had in a quiet, deliberate way expressed his wish to decide for

and moor, and nothing but these green hills and hollows dropping downward between !

'What distance should you say these hills and hollows represent?' asked Mr. Bartholomew, speaking in the slow, impressive tones which he used even when there was nothing to be impressed.

'Two miles?' ventured Genevieve.

'Probably three, as the crow flies, and certainly four or five by the highroad.'

'So much? But I see, there is more between us and the edge of the cliff than one takes in at a glance. There is a village to the left.'

'This one, almost at our feet? It is Murk-Marishes—the hamlet of Murk-Marishes—the parish seems to extend indefinitely on this side. A mile or two beyond—over that sedgy flat—you see a large village; that is Thirkeld Abbas. They speak of it as "the town." You will have to do your shopping there.'

'Delightful! We will go and buy something to-day—something that will be useful for the cottage. . . . Can we see the cottage from here?'

Mr. Bartholomew turned to the northward.

'I can see the chimneys and the top of the thatched gable,' he said. 'They are there, on the slope of the hill, about half-way between here and Murk-Marishes. That tree hides the cottage. It used to be rather a picturesque little place. We will go and see it as soon after breakfast as you like.'

Miss Craven did not preside at the breakfast-table.

'She had had her breakfast four hours ago,' she said with a smile that was not altogether one of amusement. 'Besides, it is churning-day,' she added, as if to account for her broad white apron, and her lilac print bonnet. She had taken in at a glance Genevieve's soft creamy-gray dress, with all its details of finish and style. 'To think o' coming downstairs in a gown like that first thing of a morning!' she said to herself as she went back to the dairy. 'She does look a helpless, useless sort o' thing, with her yellow hair, an' her finery, an' her white hands; she's fit for nothing but a waxwork show! I wonder how many picters he'll ha' te paint te keep her i' clothes for a twelvemonth?'

But it was soon over, and now I am glad; for the best is yet to be.'

'Wait till after to-morrow before you say that.'

'To-morrow! You are thinking of the journey over the moor? Ah! I shall love the moor as I love the sea. I am impatient for to-morrow.'

Noel Bartholomew smiled, and caught back a short, quick sigh as he did so. Genevieve had inherited her temperamental cheerfulness, with other things, from her mother. He was thankful for it always, and he had never been more thankful than during the past few weeks of confusion, pain, perplexity, indecision.

Now and then his gratitude was mingled not a little with fear, with self-reproach. Was the child really as light-hearted as she seemed? Had she no life of her own that she should thus with such pliant gracefulness of spirit lend herself to the needs of another life? Were there no depths, no undercurrents of personal desire? Had her existence no aim in it as yet? Was it in truth the utterly impersonal thing it seemed to be?

He was glad that she should say so much as this. 'One has regrets; it has not been easy.' It seemed to reassure him. Had there been effort or tension underneath she would not have gone so near the cause of it. The small confession was valuable to him.

Save for the one great bereavement, Genevieve had known but little of any of life's sterner sorrows. Her eighteen years of life had been years of such steadfast-seeming good that until lately no ideas of any grave change had presented themselves. Nothing had been wanting. Love had been there, and friendship; the finer sort of intellectual people had come and gone across her path; art of every kind had taught her the canons of loveliness; music had stolen in upon the days with sweetness, and swept across the nights with power to soothe, to uplift. Yet is it strange to say that in all this there had been no full satisfaction? Is it incomprehensible to admit that while this fair life was passing it had not seemed to be the ideal life for which the soul of the girl was yearning?

It could not be said that she was dissatisfied; yet she was conscious of activities which she could neither deaden nor repress; conscious of want, of lowness, of human and spiritual narrowness.

bonny feäce, Barbara?' Then suddenly his tone changed, and his face seemed to change too. 'You mustn't goä out o' doors wi' that goon on, honey, nut te-day. It's going te snaw. It allus snaws on Langbarugh Moor. Don't goä oot o' doors te-day, honey.'

'You'll frighten t' young laädy, Joseph,' said poor Mrs. Craven in meek tones. She was knitting a gray stocking; she had sat there in the wide chimney-corner knitting gray stockings for years past now. It was a cosy and quiet nook for the two old people. A turf fire smouldered on the large hearthstone; a kettle swung from the crook; there was an old oak dresser opposite, on which were ranged the shining brass and copper pans, the pewter dishes, the old willow-patterned plates. The things seemed to speak, to tell of prosperous days, of substance, of success. Other things whispered contradiction. Were the whispers growing louder as the days went by?

Genevieve went in and out; little by little old Craven told his piteous tale of the sudden snowstorm, the loss of the ewes, and the unyeaned lambs. It was not the money loss he spoke of now—that had 'passed out of his mind—it was the suffering of the dumb surprised creatures, the cruelty of the driving snow, the treacherousness of the hollows of Langbarugh Moor.

'Ya'll nut goä oot, honey—ya'll nut goä on te t' moor te-ääy,' he went on pleading. 'It's sure te snaw afore neet. T' snaw's allus driftin' ower Langbarugh Moor.'

It was almost noon when Genevieve, Miss Craven, and Mr. Bartholomew set out to inspect the cottage. Dorothy had given Genevieve a moment's surprise when she came downstairs dressed for the little expedition. Her silver-gray alpaca dress—she called it a lustre—her black silk mantle, her small gray straw bonnet relieved with pink ribbons, had wrought quite a transformation. If Genevieve had dared, she would have said, 'How young you look! and how pretty!' It was evident that Miss Craven knew not only what to wear, but how to wear the things she had. None of these were of yesterday. Many a summer Sunday evening had seen them carefully folded away, but to the last they would have the virtues of fitness and conscientiousness.

Old Joseph came out to the door as they were starting.

laädy like yon wiv all her white furs an' feathers ridin' iv a carrier's waggin?'

'Can't saäy 'at iver Ah did. But what were they te deä? If it hadn't ha' been Birkan Brigg cattle-fair there'd ha' been half a dozen traps to get. As it is, neäbody could get yan for neither love nor money.'

This was quite true. Noel Bartholomew, thinking of his daughter, had declined the carrier's waggon unhesitatingly at first: but Genevieve had besought him to accept of it. What could be more delightful than the big, round-topped, picturesque vehiele? It would hold everything, shelter everything, and it offered chances of a perfectly new experience.

There was quite a leave-taking—thanks, smiles, sixpences, good wishes; then Genevieve and her father went up the street, old Luke shouting fussily that he would soon overtake them. They passed the church, the old-fashioned rectory, the few cottages that straggled along the lane. There were some dahlias and holly-hocks dripping in the mist, vague faces looked out from cottage-doors, wandering eyes watched the two strangers gliding swiftly away into the mystery beyond.

'Will they come back agaäin, mother?' asked a small speculative Yorkshireman. He was looking out between the divided trunk of a gnarled apple-tree.

'That's mair nor Ah can tell tha, honey,' said the woman, feeling somehow as if the child's question was of the nature of a foreboding.

She stood some time straining her eyes in the effort to peer into the silver haze that was upon the hills. It showed no signs of lifting yet. It seemed to move on and on, unshrouding little by little a farmstead, a group of pensive cattle, a clump of fir-trees, a dark hill-top, then veiling them again hastily in white mist, in still silence.

'It is as if one had to be silent to be in keeping with things,' said Mr. Bartholomew in his quiet, emphatic way.

He was awaking to the fact of his own taciturnity.

'But you do not dislike it, father? It is not depressing?'

'Depressing!—no, except in the sense that most beautiful things are depressing. You remember Keats:

and then a spray flung itself aloft, waving in the sunshine against the far distance of dark-blue sea and sky.

'I wish I could bring a hundred little gutter children from the London slums to this hillside to-day,' Genevieve said, as they came to a sharp turn in the road—the ripe brambles seemed to cluster more thickly than ever in the sheltered corner by the wall. 'It seems such a pity,' she continued, 'that the blackberries should wither here ungathered, when there are so many little fingers that have never gathered one, so many little lips that have never been stained by one. . . . Wait till my ship comes into port. There shall be a feast-day!'

A minute later her eye rested on the thatched cottage that was to be her home. No cloud-shadow was upon it; there was no sudden chill in the air. A flight of white pigeons was just settling upon the roof.

CHAPTER VII.

A SCENE OF PROBATION.

'I foresee, and I could foretell
Thy future portion, sure and well—
But those passionate eyes speak true, speak true,
And let them say what thou shalt do.'

R. BROWNING: *The Flight of the Duchess*.

'A COTTAGE in a cornfield and a picturesque stile where the gate should be!' exclaimed Genevieve in pleased surprise.

'I shouldn't ha' thought 'at you'd ha' known 'at stubble meant corn,' said Miss Craven, with the touch of disdain which she seemed to have adopted for special use when she spoke to Genevieve. 'As for the stile, it's the awk'ardest stile i' the district. I've asked Mr. Damer to put a gate up till I'm tired o' askin' him.'

Certainly the stile was an awkward one, and the path through the field was narrow; midway it turned at a sharp angle in the direction of the cottage. Just at the turn, a great covey of partridges started outwards with a sudden burst, and went whirring and fluttering up the stubble to the wide furzy pasture that skirted the moor.

mew. 'What do you say, Genevieve? Will you get in? I know you are impatient for the new experience.'

'So I am,' admitted the girl; 'and it looks enchanting inside the waggon. But not yet, not yet,' she said with a smile and a little wave of her hand to old Luke as she turned away. 'The rapture of rest is in exact proportion to the intensity of weariness. I wish to be weary.'

'Your wish is likely to be gratified,' said Mr. Bartholomew.

'Before we reach Murk-Marishes? Yes: I suppose so. That thought alone will prevent me from dissipating my resources to too great an extent. I have no wish to arrive at the Hags in a defenceless condition.'

'Defenceless?'

'That was the word I used. I meant a state of not being able to defend myself'

'From whom?' asked Mr. Bartholomew.

'From Miss Craven.'

'You are going to be afraid of her?'

'I think so. I may even say that I have a presentiment that it will be so.'

'And that presentiment arises out of descriptions given by me?'

'Entirely out of your graphic descriptions.'

'Tell me what you see in that curious imagination of yours?' said Mr. Bartholomew, after a brief wondering pause.

'I will. . . . To begin with, I see a Yorkshirewoman.'

'You will find that that epithet is less descriptive than it may seem.'

'But there is such a thing as a typical Yorkshirewoman.'

'Yes; a thing that is to be found more frequently on the stage and in third-rate novels than in any of the three Ridings of Yorkshire.'

'Still it exists? For me it is to be personified by Miss Craven. I see her distinctly. She is a middle-aged woman, tall, large, angular. Her hair, which you describe as being black twenty years ago, is iron-gray now, very smooth and straight; and her dark eyes look hard; in fact, her whole expression is one of hardness, keenness, and shrewdness; and the corners of her mouth are not quite free from the suspicion of sarcasm. She carries her-

dinner-time. I am going over to Thurkeld Abbas to see Can Gabriel.'

'And I am not to go with you?'

Mr. Bartholomew understood the tone, appreciated the effort that graceful obedience required. But apart from the reason he had given, he had enough motive for his decision. He had natural desire to be alone as he passed through Murk-M... The place was full of associations. Memory would meet him in the village street, 'holding the folded annals of his youth.' Reg... would seal his lips with her silent finger.

'Yon's Usselby Hall,' said Dorothy as she and Genevieve went upward by a shorter path through the fields. Miss Craven was indicating a dark purple point, a mere jagged edge of the moorland, so far as Genevieve could see. The point was the farthest point of Usselby Crags, and the house stood just below among the almost leafless trees; but being at least two miles distant, there was little to be seen of it from Netherbank.

'It seems a bleak place for anyone to live in,' said Genevieve, not much interested in what she was saying.

'So it is,' replied Miss Craven; 'only nobody does live in it except old Ben Charlock and Jael. I don't suppose Mr. Kirkwald will ever come there again to live—not for any length of time. When he was younger he seemed quite fond o' this coun', He wrote a book—a poetry book—"Northern Wood Notes," he called it; an' you'd ha' thought 'at he cared more for Usselby Crags an' Langbarugh Moor than for all the foreign countries in the world put together. I've heard say 'at he's shamed o' some o' them poems now. He was only a lad, just fresh from Oxford when he wrote them. He's written another book since—no poetry; it's something about philosophy—"The Philosophy o' Culture," I think it's called. I saw it once in a bookseller's shop over at Market Studley. But I could make nothing of it; it was over-far learnt for me. It's curious 'at he never puts no name to his books—nothing but his initials, "G. K."; for I've heard Canoe Gabriel say 'at he was a first-rate scholar, an' might do anything he liked so far as book-learnin' went.'

So Miss Craven ran on, much to Genevieve's satisfaction, since it appeared to be an evidence of conciliatory intention. And

she sat on the edge of the waggon beside old Luke, where the breeze could blow upon her face. This she professed to enjoy with enthusiasm.

Beyond doubt it was an enjoyable thing to pass through Thornerdale on a perfect autumn day. As the morning wore the sun began to pour down brilliantly, glittering on village steeples, lighting up busy farmsteads, gilding the refined gold of beech and maple, painting the flowers that grew in the cottage gardens, sparkling in the stony little becks that ran rippling and foaming along. Blackbirds flew chuckling across the pathway; thrushes sang their autumn songs among the leaves that were fluttering down. It was strangely stimulating. Genevieve did not fail to notice the keen living light that had come into her father's eyes. The comprehension of the present moment was in them, and an intentness that was like a promise for the future.

So far it had not been a silent journey. Old Luke seemed to be explaining or relating something all through the dale. At village inns, at garden gates, by farmyard walls, he had himself to explain, his presence there, the intentions of his fellow-travellers, so far as he knew them. Hardly a wayfaring man passed by unquestioned, uninformed. The old man did not appear to be noting how fast the day was going.

CHAPTER IV.

LANGBARUGH MOOR: THE SECOND PART OF AN OVERTURE.

‘This young brilliant Ayesha was one day questioning him, “Now am not I better than Kadijah? She was a widow, old, and had lost her looks; you love me better than you love her?” “No, by Allah!” answered Mahomet; “no, by Allah! She believed in me when none else would believe.”’

AFTER an hour of rest and refreshment at Thorner Head, it was observable that old Luke was less communicative; it might be that there was less to be communicated. The bare rugged hillside was not suggestive of local or personal narrative.

Genevieve and her father were walking up the hill, over a stony pathway with fading bracken and dark whin on either hand.

all if she had not seen that the stranger was almost as shy as herself. . . . That was the beginning—tears, sympathy, a sweet smile, a sudden compassion.

Clarice Brooke was the daughter of an architect, who had gone to his grave worn out with failure, and the sorrow and shame of failure, leaving his only child to the untender mercies of an elderly cousin of her mother's, her sole relative so far as she knew. When Miss Peters died, her annuity dying with her, Noel Bartholomew was thankful to the core of him that he was able to offer a home, a name, and a life's deep love to the woman whose love had been his from the day that her eyes first fell upon him. It came in the end to be such love as he had half-despaired of winning: and he knew well that in winning it he had won life's best and greatest prize. Till the day of her death he had held no other view than this; and the difference death had made was the difference of love's increase rather than of love's change or ending.

After standing there awhile, thinking, yearning, fighting with the strong, silent despair which had never left him for one waking hour, he passed on, turning away by the road that led through the sedgy marsh to Thirkeld Abbas. The little town looked exactly as it had always looked. The Rectory was there by the church; the old clock in the tower was chiming the quarters as sweetly as ever. A young clergyman was coming out by the vestry-door. He blushed with surprise at the sight of a stranger in the streets of Thirkeld Abbas.

'Mr. Severne, I believe? May I introduce myself? My name is Bartholomew,' said the stranger courteously, hoping to overcome the young curate's deepening confusion; but it was not to be lightly overcome.

'Oh, I say!' exclaimed the young man, with another and a deeper blush, and a smile that was, perhaps, more than adequate to the occasion. 'Canon Gabriel will be sorry—he'll be awfully sorry. He's gone to Market Studley to a rural-decanal meeting. But won't you come in? Won't you have some luncheon or—something?'

'Thank you, not to-day,' said Mr. Bartholomew. 'I shall be over to-morrow, most likely, or the next day, when I hope to have

'What is there when one arrives at the top of this hill?' asked Genevieve, after walking upward for half an hour in silence.

'Another hilltop.'

'And after that?'

'Another.'

The bank of gray cloud was drifting rapidly all over the sky now; the withered bracken, amber and lilac, crimson and ivory-white, vivid green and warm russet brown, was beginning to bend quiveringly to the breeze that swept with increasing force across the moor. The great stretches of dead heather shuddered in masses; the tiny yellow leaves flew sadly away from the sloethorn; the black-faced moorland sheep were moving restlessly from hillock to hillock, and showed a tendency to congregate. It was fully evident that bad weather was approaching.

'It is only a question of time,' said Mr. Bartholomew, looking at his daughter with apprehension. 'We shall find old Luke at the next inn. He will probably know something of what we have to expect.'

The small stone hut known as the Moor Edge Inn, and which Genevieve did not care to enter, stood on the top of the last rise in the ascent of the slope of Langbarugh Moor. The great wild waste itself lay beyond. There was nothing to burst upon the sight. Slowly, and with a sense of oppressiveness, you became aware that you stood looking out over an apparently boundless desolation. The purple-black barrenness stretched like a gloomy sea from the one horizon to the other. The gray, flying scud seemed as if it touched the dark distance. A few weather-blanchèd boulders rested here and there among the dead, brown masses of ling and furze; the road stretched away, white and winding, till it was lost in the rugged curves. A flight of crows passed with sinuous movement and hoarse, derisive, mocking notes.

'Noo; this disn't leuk varry promisin',' said old Luke, coming out from the warm turf fire with evident reluctance. 'Ya'll ha' te bide insahde o' t' waggin', Ah reckon.'

'You think we are going to have a storm?' asked Mr. Bartholomew. Genevieve detected a loss of buoyancy in his tone as he spoke.

down there ; all was silent save the soothing murmur of the little stream.

Was it a dream ? Was it a poem ? A minute more, a sudden turn in the path, and he stood in the presence of a living picture.

A good picture flashes itself upon your senses in all its entirety at a single glance ; in one moment your conception is made. Important details may remain to be considered, but they do not affect that first forceful impression. So forceful was it in this case that Noel Bartholomew stood still, arrested by a figure as strikingly picturesque as any he had ever placed on canvas in his life. It was the figure of a lady attired in a sweeping drapery of pale pink serge. She was below the road, sitting on one of the large stones by the side of the stream. Her hat was lying among the ferns behind her ; an Indian shawl of glowing colour fell from her shoulders ; her white arm, only half concealed by the soft lace that edged her sleeve, was thrown outwards, so that her hand touched lightly a spray of not-yet-leafless honeysuckle. The dark head, resting on the other hand, was turned a little upward, so that the face, with all its beauty of olive tint, of full rich curve, of vivid expression, was seen to the uttermost advantage. It was a beauty that was startling ; there was something strange in it, something perplexing.

In that moment of surprise Noel Bartholomew was not conscious of any admiration, perplexing or other. As was usual with him, he could not throw off the dreamful mood he had been in all at once. There was always an interval between absence and presence of mind. It might be that the interval was longer than usual this time. As it has been said, he stood still a few seconds while a confused sense of recognition was stealing over him. Then he simply raised his hat, as much by way of apology for intrusion as by way of salutation, and passed on, saying to himself, ' It is Miss Richmond ; certainly, it is Miss Richmond ! '

Once he fancied that a little sound came after him through the trees, a sound as of a musical, mocking, audible something that might be a spoken word, or might be a mere echo of a word, or even a mere memory of one reverberating across the unforgotten years. Vague as it was, it haunted him all along the edge of Langbarugh Moor.

That would be new to the admirers of the "Flight of Saint Barbara," of the "Jeanne D'Arc," of the "Flinging of Excalibur," of a dozen other noted pictures that I could name in a breath. Wasted your life ! You have its best yet to live, so far as the world and your work goes.

" You and your pictures linked
With love about, and praise, till life shall end."

If you never paint another picture, no man can say that yours was a wasted life. But you will paint. All day I have felt it, all day I have been glad of every mile, because it was another mile between you and the carping, doubting, ignorant *dilettanti*, who were enough to paralyze a Michael Angelo. You know it was so ; you know that for ten years past you have craved for seclusion, for something as near to solitude as you might have. And now it is here, a vast and splendid solitude, instinct with possibilities. . . . Say that you are glad, my father !

More than once a strange quick light had quivered under the man's eyelids as an old thought, an old pride, an old hope struck him with fresh force as it came from the young girl's lips.

'I am glad, my child, if for nothing else then, I am glad that you are my child, my inspiration.'

'No, not that ; but I can stay with you when the inspiration does not.' Then her voice changed, and she said lightly, 'But you are aware that I have impulses of my own sometimes ; and just now I am impelled to suggest that we should arrange ourselves among the rugs in front of the waggon. Come ! We have Leah's cakes to eat, and here are the cups of hot tea.'

They were soon off again ; out on the top of the treeless, wind-swept waste known as Langbarugh Moor. Old Luke had awakened at last to the fact that the day was really done, and that a rough night was at hand. No conversation was possible as the lumbering waggon went jolting, swaying, swinging from side to side among the rough stones of the moorland road. It was growing darker and darker ; the wind was growing stronger and colder. At times there was a rift in the flying blackness of the heavens, disclosing lines of cold steely light. That was all they saw of the sunset. The rest was darkness, wildness, weariness ; a sense of a vast desolate, sterile world.

kept strictly in the silence that Fate prescribes for hopes that are yet unaccomplished.

It had never occurred to Genevieve that the little door under the thatched porch would be opened so many times to admit visitors, strangers with friendly faces and voices, with strong northern accents, with wonderings and questionings, reserved and unreserved admirations. Some of them came from afar and stayed to tea, and some went home congratulating themselves that the Bartholomews were likely to remain in the neighbourhood for an indefinite length of time. It seemed an odd thing to leave London, to break up a home, to choose a place like Murk-Marishes to live in : but then it was quite understood that people of genius were odd, always and unmistakably odd in everything they did.

It was mentioned—almost with dissatisfaction—that Mr. Bartholomew's manner was not so odd as it might have been, that his behaviour, on the whole, was really very much like that of any other gentleman. This was a reversal of ideas still existent in remote districts, and therefore made opening for doubt and speculation. To some simple souls it was a little relief that he should sit and talk of his crop of apples, of the way the studio chimney smoked when the wind was in the north ; that he should confess to having read the *Market Studley Gazette*, that he should already know something of local politics. But there were others who agreed that this was not—well, it was not what people expected of a man whose name had been seen in a hundred newspapers, with praise and commendation and unlimited prophecy attached to it. It was as if he had been guilty of fraudulent pretence.

If Noel Bartholomew could only have known what was expected of him by his neighbours, it is sadly possible that he might have endeavoured to save them from disappointment. It would have been so very easy to save them. But since he might not know, nor even conjecture, he went on laying himself open to suspicion—nay, to worse than suspicion. Mrs. Caton, who was a lawyer's widow, and who claimed to be the leader of such intellectual and artistic society as the neighbourhood afforded, gave her verdict at once and unhesitatingly : 'There is nothing in the man,' she said

'You are equal to defence?'

'Perfectly.'

The rain was pouring in torrents; old Luke was shouting to the man who had come out from the farmyard to help him; the two sheep-dogs were barking; a candle was coming along the passage to the open door.

'Come in!' said a voice in tones that were hard and unabashed. 'We've been expectin' ya this five hours.'

It was Miss Craven, and as Genevieve had anticipated, she spoke the dialect, and she spoke it curtly, but the form of it was modified so that no impression of coarseness or ignorance was given.

Mr. Bartholomew had some directions to give to the two men, and Genevieve followed Miss Craven along a narrow dim passage with several turnings and windings in it. There was a cheery fire of peat and pinewood burning in the parlour. The table was spread, not bounteously perhaps, but with a tempting perfection of neatness and niceness.

'I am sorry we are so late,' said Genevieve, as Miss Craven turned to light the lamp without further welcome or greeting; 'we have been longer on the journey than we expected to be.'

'If you'd known as much o' Luke Acomb as I know you might mebbe ha' thought 'at you'd done well to get here at all,' rejoined Miss Craven, carefully adjusting the chimney of the lamp as she spoke. This done, she lifted her keen dark eyes to Genevieve's face for the first time. Her look was quite inscrutable. It was impossible to say what impression she was receiving. After an unflinching moment or two, Genevieve's eyelids dropped a little, and a pink flush came over her face, increasing its extreme loveliness. 'So you're Noel Bartholomew's daughter?' said Miss Craven, in tones that were as little to be understood by a stranger as was the expression of her countenance.

'Yes,' Genevieve said with a smile. 'I dare say I am a surprise to you. You would not expect to see me so—so much grown up?'

'Miss Craven shall tell you how much surprised she feels to-morrow, dear,' said Mr. Bartholomew, coming into the room and offering his hand to Miss Craven's unresponsive touch.

to imply that he is capable of finer thought, of finer feeling than his neighbours. Now, if a man can think, it is only common-sense to suppose that he can utter his thoughts.'

'Not on demand, not when he feels that he is being watched and weighed for the benefit of the neighbourhood,' interposed little Mrs. Damer, a lady who always appeared to be on the verge of losing her temper, and did, in point of fact, lose it occasionally. 'If I were Mr. Bartholomew I should stick stolidly to the price of potatoes, and the surprising cheapness of moor mutton.'

'That is just about what he did "stick to,"' rejoined Mrs. Caton, who could express inverted commas with unsurpassable skill.

'But you admire *Miss* Bartholomew?' interposed young Mrs. Pencefold, in a conciliatory tone. 'Surely you admire her?'

'My dear, I *do* admire her,' replied Mrs. Caton, with judicial considerateness. 'I admire her prettiness, her politeness, and her slight figure. But there I must stop, it seems. I do not wish to give offence; and we can all of us hold our own opinion. No one will be more glad than I if the Bartholomews should prove to be acquisitions to the more intellectual society of the place.'

Again there was a wondering silence, and again it was broken by Miss Standen.

'Mr. Bartholomew is very much altered, don't you think he is, Mrs. Caton?' asked the lady in civil tones.

'Altered! Altered from what?'

'From what he was twenty years ago.'

There was a pause, a stare, a little laugh.

'My dear Miss Standen! Twenty years ago I was a child in the schoolroom.'

'Probably: but you are the same age as Miss Richmond, exactly the same. Twenty years ago she was seventeen, old enough to carry on a vigorous flirtation with Mr. Bartholomew, who was years older than she was. I saw nothing of it myself, but I heard plenty. It was said that he couldn't go out sketching anywhere in the district without her joining him, and sitting watching him for hours together.'

'That might be due to her love of art,' suggested Mrs. Pencefold, a rather amiable Lancashire lady, of sufficiently good birth to

dawn or sunset, such effects as blot out all details, and even actual form. Miss Craven had had her own ideas concerning these, and her ideas had been confirmed by her neighbours, so that it was hardly to be wondered at that she should have no very exalted views of Mr. Bartholomew's powers as an artist. Indeed, it may be doubted whether she had exalted views of any artist or of any art, and she had long ago given it as her opinion that 'of all lazy ways o' gettin' a livin' paintin' picturs was about the laziest.'

'And now,' said Mr. Bartholomew, the edge of his appetite being dulled a little, 'and now tell me, Miss Craven, what important changes have taken place in the neighbourhood of Murk-Marishes during all these years? I know nothing, and I am impatient to know.'

Somewhat to Genevieve's surprise, Dorothy Craven had placed herself at the head of the table without invitation. Miss Craven's idea of having 'lodgers' differed materially from Miss Bartholomew's views on the same subject. Genevieve was by no means sorry, she liked it on the whole; and Miss Craven was attentive, if not urbane. Moreover, she looked in keeping with the room, with the general atmosphere of things, as she sat there. She wore no cap, her dark hair was still dark, Genevieve's prediction notwithstanding, and she had a fine open-air colour on her cheek. She seemed to typify the northern autumn in the bright keen austerity of her appearance and manner.

Miss Craven did not reply at once to Mr. Bartholomew's request for information. She seemed to be considering the matter.

'It's over twenty years since you left Murk-Marishes, isn't it?' she inquired, handing him another cup of tea.

'Yes; a month or two over.'

'And you asked what important changes there'd been?'

'I think I did.'

'Well, then, so far as I can recollect there hasn't a single thing happened important enough to mention.'

'Happy place!'

'I've said myself 'at it were like a better place, for there's neither marryin' nor givin' i' marriage, an' the folks don't die.'

through a martyrdom of some kind. That look of patience, of subdued pain, never came into any human countenance but by great tribulation. . . . We know nothing of it all, nothing of his suffering, nothing of his life, and but very little of his work. Why, then, should we judge so harshly? Why should we sit in judgment upon him at all?

'My dear Mrs. Damer,' said Mrs. Caton, who had fully recovered herself, 'surely you exaggerate the importance of any remarks that have been made! I may even add that you mistake the nature of them. . . . Judgment! What, in your opinion, is judgment?'

'In my opinion one judges a man when one decides on insufficient data either that he is a flirt, or that he is a fool. We have decided that Mr. Bartholomew is—if not a fool, at least a stupid and shallow-brained individual, and this because he has talked to some of us for half an hour at a time on topics that we considered trifling and commonplace. I do not doubt it; he talked to me in the same way, evidently hardly knowing that he talked at all, or, if he did know, wishing that he might be silent. But why should he talk? Why especially should he talk for effect? Why should he try to impress anybody by fluent orations? His aim is of another kind, of a higher kind. I hate your clever, hard, glittering people, who will speak of a broken heart with an epigram, or crush a reputation with a paradox.'

'I hope it will come to Mr. Bartholomew's knowledge that he has at least one eloquent friend,' remarked Mrs. Caton with effective contrast of tone.

'I don't care if it does,' said Mrs. Damer; 'and, moreover, he won't care, either. He has other things to care for; and he knows that he must stand or fall by the work he does, and not by the gossip of the place he lives in. Further than that, he knows that he has to die, and have his life written in picturesque phrase, and with sensational descriptions, before such as we are can see him in any desirable or worthy light. I saw the other day in a book that Canon Gabriel lent me, that pure genius is probably as unrecognisable as Pure Divinity was when It walked the earth. . . . I believe that is true.'

Mrs. Damer went away, doubtless somewhat to her hostess's

'I meant old Mr. Richmond's death,' said Miss Craven, watching her interlocutor more carefully than before. 'He died three or four years back quite sudden, an' his wife only lived a fortnight after.'

'Then is there no one but Miss Richmond at Yarrell now?'

'Miss Richmond an' her brother, Mr. Cecil. There was a little boy, you remember?'

'Ah, yes; I do remember now. He was a shy, delicate, fretful little fellow. I used to think that he wouldn't live.'

'He has lived; it's about three years since he came of age.'

'And he and his sister live alone at Yarrell Croft? It must be a little dull for him, I should say. How does he spend his time?'

'Shootin' sparrows with a saloon pistol,' said Miss Craven with one of her most satirical smiles.

'I never thought to hear that said of a Yorkshire gentleman,' interposed Genevieve, whose interest in the conversation was not to be measured by the number of her interruptions.

'You'll not hear it twice in your lifetime,' replied Miss Craven.

'And what of Usselby Hall?' asked Mr. Bartholomew presently. 'I forget the owner's name. I believe he was a mere boy. He was on the Continent all the time I was down here.'

'Mr. Kirkoswald? He's mostly on the Continent. It was him that was engaged to Miss Richmond. Nobody ever knew exactly how it happened that the engagement came to nothing; but it did come to nothing. An' he went abroad again, an' he's been abroad ever since. Once or twice he's come home unexpectedly, an' stopped a week or so; but it seems as if he couldn't settle. He's allus off again directly.'

'And Mr. Crudas? I must not forget him,' said Mr. Bartholomew, occupying himself intently with the pattern of his teacup.

The slow hot flush that swept over Miss Craven's face, mounting to the very roots of her hair, was evidently a flush of pain.

'I know nothing of Ishmael Crudas,' she said curtly, 'an' I don't want to know. I reckon you'd find him at Swarthcliff Top if you wanted him.'

'I forget if there is anyone else,' Mr. Bartholomew went on

thing—Noel Bartholomew hardly knew what—it might be the sunshine, the bracing frosty air of the morning, the peace and stillness of the place ; it might be any of these, or none of them, but something had stirred in his mental veins, and impelled him to the old creative mood that had once been his without let or hindrance. There was no sign of any sudden fine frenzy or enthusiasm. The canvas was placed on the easel, a figure was drawn in rapidly with red chalk ; it was drawn from a sketch made long before, a sketch which was half a study, the head being carefully completed. It was the head of a youngish man, pale, red-haired, intellectual-looking. The expression was perplexing in the extreme. Was he a saint ? a poet ? a casuist ? It was as impossible to help conjecture, as it was to arrive at any definite conclusion.

‘ You will reproduce it exactly ? ’ Genevieve asked.

She and her father were sitting over the fire after their early dinner. They were intending to go out after a little while, away across the sunny, fuzzy upland to the moor. It looked very tempting up there. Cattle were climbing about among the hillocks ; sheep were browsing between the patches of brown ling. Out on the top there was an old man ‘ graving ’ turf. By-and-by a carriage with a pair of horses crossed a corner of the edge of the moor.

‘ Yes ; I shall try to reproduce the head as nearly as I can,’ Mr. Bartholomew was saying in his usual quiet, yet intent, way. ‘ I did not think it had been so good. I shall not improve upon it.’

The two soon relapsed into the pleasant silence that reigned so much in the little room. Genevieve was busy with her needle, embroidering a purple iris upon a piece of gold-coloured satin. Keturah, the small and somewhat eccentric maid-servant, who had been recommended by Miss Craven, was tidying up the garden a little. Presently she burst into the house.

‘ Here’s Miss Richmond fra Yarrell Croft ; she’s gettin’ over t’ stile ! An’ Mr. Cecil’s wiv her ; an’ t’ coach is gone doon t’ lane. Ah’ll bet anything t’ coachman’s gone to put it up at t’ Wheat-sheaf. . . . Hev Ah to fetch some tea in when they’ve been here a little bit, as ya tell’d ma when them folks com fra Lowmoor yesterday ?’

old man's brain for ever. And now his wife's memory was failing, so that in addition to all other labours and sorrows Dorothy had two helpless old people to tend and care for, and ceaselessly watch; and the service was not offered by measure, nor untenderly.

Of these and other troubles Genevieve knew nothing as yet. She only saw that there was something about Miss Craven not to be understood all at once; and she had already a strong impression that it was something she ought to desire to understand. 'I think she is enduring some trial—enduring secretly,' the girl said to herself, as she lay listening in the dark to the rain that was on the roof, and the fitful wuthering of the night wind. All else about the farm was hushed and still.

CHAPTER VI.

LAST YEAR'S SNOW.

'O, let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven!
Keep me in temper: I would not be mad.'

King Lear.

THE fold-yard being at the back of the house, Genevieve slept on past cock-crow, past milking-time, past the noisy feeding-time of calves and fowls, past the shouting and confusion of old Luke Aeomb's departure. When she awoke the sun was shining, gleaming brightly over field and farm, over hill and dale, and ah!—was it possible?—over a distance of wide, cloudless, dark-blue sea!

'This, then, was one of your surprises, my father!' she exclaimed, gliding down the little garden path to the gate where Mr. Bartholomew stood. The scent of southern-wood and mint and pennyroyal was in the air; gossamer-threads all hung with diamonds stretched across the one rose-bush and the fuchsia-tree; a last pansy held up its head over the creeping stonecrop.

'You forgive me, then?'

'For keeping the secret? Yes, indeed. I thought we were miles and miles from the sea. Think of it—of having both sea

speaking in the low, deliberate tone that suited herself and her manner so well. People were compelled to listen, and to listen attentively to every syllable, if they cared to hear what she was saying; and for one reason or another most people did care.

'Yes, I hope we shall remain,' Genevieve replied. 'I hope so more earnestly every day.'

'You like living in the country, then?'

'I like living in this country, intensely. I did not know that I was capable of caring so strongly for a place in so short a time. . . . I think I hardly yet understand it,' the girl went on smilingly. 'It is as if Nature had some odic force, some secret influence, which she had never cared to exercise upon me till now.'

'Ah! That is the sort of thing that is to be found in modern poetry, I suppose?'

Genevieve looked up quickly; she was surprised and a little puzzled by the tone.

'Is it?' she asked. 'Did it strike you like an echo? I was only trying to express what I felt. Still, these days of many books are certainly days of many echoes. One comes across them everywhere in literature and conversation. Do you not think so?'

'That is clever of you, very clever!' said Miss Richmond. 'You are trying to find out if I am well-read. I am not. I never open a book—not now.'

This was said with the same cold deliberateness of tone. Genevieve, who was not unaccustomed to human eccentricities, felt that some demand was about to be made upon her faculty of interpretation. She was perplexed, yet interested, and already awakened to the perception that here was a human being who presented difficulties enough to repel, mystery enough to attract. This perception was, of course, mainly intuitive; and being premature, might certainly fail to stand the test of further intercourse.

There was a brief silence, during which Genevieve had been fully aware that she was the object of a second close scrutiny; and her colour deepened perceptibly under the conviction. When she looked up again a rather striking change had come over Miss Richmond's face: some of the self-complacency had gone out of

Dorothy Craven was not musing idly; the churn was flying round at the rate of fifty turns a minute, and she was listening carefully all the while to the sound it made. The butter was beginning to come; the buttermilk had to be let off every few minutes now; it was always passed carefully through a hair sieve, and the crumbs of butter returned to the churn. Dorothy was proud of her butter; proud, too, of the cool, sweet dairy, with its shining pans and its white, scoured woodwork. Consequently she felt no annoyance when she saw Genevieve standing somewhat timidly near the door.

'May I come in, Miss Craven?' she asked in her gentlest tone. 'I have never seen a dairy. And my father wishes to know if you will be too busy to go with us to Netherbank to see the cottage to-day.'

'You can go with yerselves,' answered Dorothy without looking up. She was replacing the peg in the churn.

'We can, but we should like it better if you would come with us. You can explain things, and advise us. I am hoping that you will be kind enough to tell me and teach me a great deal.'

Dorothy ignored the hope. She was thinking of her own reasons for wishing to go down to the cottage, wondering how she could manage it.

'I couldn't go till I have got the butter made up,' she said. 'An' then there's other things.'

'Can I help you in any way? Let me try,' said Genevieve, a little roused by Miss Craven's glance and smile. 'At least, I can remove our breakfast things, if you will let me go into the kitchen.'

'You can go anywhere you like,' said Dorothy, half disdainfully, as she began churning again at least as vigorously as before. When she stopped again she could hear voices in the kitchen. Her father was talking, Genevieve was answering, old Mrs. Craven was dropping murmurs of confirmation; she had got up to make a little curtsey when Genevieve went in, and her husband had touched his thin white locks, smiling, wondering, apparently half amazed.

'Eh, but it's a bonny feäce!' he said in tones of childish delight. 'An' it's bonny gold hair, an' a bonny goon! Isn't it a

desire to see the studio. Mr. Bartholomew had not found conversation with young Richmond an easy matter ; perhaps it had been less easy because of his keen consciousness of Miss Richmond's attention to all that passed. He knew that no word had escaped her.

They all went out into the sunlit orchard together. Genevieve, walking by Miss Richmond's side, felt her eighteen years and her general immaturity to be decided disadvantages. She had not noticed till now the stateliness of her companion's finely moulded figure, the statuesque setting of her head. The cast of *Herès*, which was one of the treasures of the studio, was not more impressively suggestive of Olympian majesty than was the figure and bearing of this imperious-looking Yorkshire lady.

Miss Richmond had a distinct remembrance of the joiner's shop ; yet she showed no surprise when she found herself in an artistically furnished studio, surrounded by rich colouring carefully subdued, by all the usual and unusual appurtenances of the painter's craft : the sketches that are more suggestive than finished pictures ; the casts that appeal only to the few ; the odds and ends of bronze and copper, of richly-tinted glass, of roughly moulded clay. There was a piece of old tapestry at one end of the studio, with salmon-coloured figures standing in awkward attitudes on a faded cloud of dark-blue wool. On the other side there was a Japanese cabinet, and a brass bowl covered with Madura etched work. A tall Persian jar stood on the ground ; behind there was a shield of ancient lacquered wood, and a sword with a Damascened blade was hanging slantwise on the wall between two unfinished pictures. Miss Richmond stopped before one of the pictures. Mr. Bartholomew was near her. Genevieve was showing Cecil Richmond some photographs of the sculpture discovered at Melos. There was a *Perseus*, a wise-looking *Zeus*, a goddess without a head, and the beautiful but mutilated figure which the art-critics were wrangling over, one naming it a *Urania*, and another asserting it to be a wingless *Victory*.

'I suppose it would be the correct thing to say that I admire them?' said young Richmond, speaking in his usual husky voice, and in a tone that was nearly as languid as his sister's.

'You're goin' oot o' doors then, honey?' he said to Genevieve, who stopped to listen with a sad smile. 'You're bent o' goin', then, but be quick back again. It's goin' te snaw. Night an' day t' snaw's driftin' ower Langbarugh Moor.'

Dorothy was moving away, but not impatiently. She was a little anxious this morning. She was to be Mr. Bartholomew's landlady, if he decided to take the cottage. It had been let on lease with the farm for generations. Lately, since it had stood empty so much, Miss Craven had tried to get rid of it, but Miss Richmond would not hear of change. It was always Miss Richmond's name that the agent, Mr. Damer, used, never Mr. Richmond's; so that the people of the neighbourhood had no clear idea of the real ownership of the various portions of the Yarrell Croft estate.

Mr. Bartholomew remembered that a doctor's widow had lived in the cottage twenty years ago. After that a cartwright had taken it, who had built himself a workshop in the orchard; and after his departure it had stood empty so long that Miss Craven, half despairing of letting it in any other way, had furnished it to suit an eccentric old man, who had offered to pay a somewhat liberal rent for a furnished cottage, providing it was a mile away from any other human dwelling.

The cottage at Netherbank was barely half a mile from Hunsgarth Hags, and but very little farther from Murk-Marishes. Still, it stood alone, and was quiet enough to please even the eccentric stranger. Unfortunately, however, for Miss Craven, he did not remain more than a couple of years—not long enough to cover the outlay he had caused her to make, and the idea of anyone else ever requiring a furnished cottage at Netherbank had been considered rather in the light of a joke in the neighbourhood of Murk-Marishes. Dorothy knew well that the coming of the Bartholomews was an unexpectedly favourable turn of fortune's wheel.

It was a steep and rugged road that led downwards from the Hags. There were low rude stone walls on either hand; patches of golden ragwort grew by the wayside, dense bramble-brakes were spreading everywhere; the amber and vermilion leaves throwing into relief the great clusters of ripe purple-black fruit. Now

The regret for the past, the pain of the present, the hopelessness of the future—these were the things that had inspired the painter's soul, so that you saw only a fair and remorseful woman, half-ready even then to throw herself at Arthur's feet, had the king been there.

'It is not my notion of Guinevere,' said Miss Richmond. 'That face reminds me of the face in Velasquez's "Magdalen at the foot of the Cross," the one at Farnley, a face that is all tears and tenderness and grief. I can believe in the repentance of Mary Magdalen, but not in the repentance of Guinevere. Perhaps I do not understand the Queen as Tennyson would have her understood, but I always think she must have felt to the last that fate had dealt hardly with her.'

'And you think the feeling that life has been hard, and circumstance difficult, would make against human repentance?'

'Yes. Surely it must do that? It must at least do that.'

'There I would venture to differ from you,' said Bartholomew courteously. 'I think that if one's eyes were not holden, one would see hardness and difficulty and trial to be aggravations of remorse rather than palliations of misdeed. The burden is laid with design and with exactness; so much is required because so much was given, and no one of us fails of his part but through weakness or willingness.'

'Not willingness—no, not willingness,' said Miss Richmond, turning away from the picture. 'There are contrary winds in life as in nature, and one is driven on to the rocks all against one's will. One cannot alter one's self, one cannot force circumstance, one cannot move others as one would.'

There was a touch as of despair in her tone, born, perhaps, of the thought that her forgetful outspokenness had not been of a nature to create the impression she wished to create. With all her talent she was apt to find her small diplomacies parting unexpectedly in the middle, like the fraying of a garment that has been too long in use.

'You mustn't mind my not admiring your "Guinevere,"' she said in conciliatory tones. 'There is so much that I can admire—this, for instance. Is it another Tennysonian subject?'

'No, it is not—though I am almost as faithful to Tennyson as

'Will one be liable to that kind of thing?' asked Genevieve, with a little pretence of being startled.

'Eminently liable,' said Mr. Bartholomew. 'If you think it will be a drawback to residence at Netherbank you must speak before it is too late.'

'I will resign myself to the partridges,' replied Genevieve, coming to a standstill in front of the cottage. Certainly it was as rude and quaint a little place as you could see. The heavy ling thatch hung low over window and wall; the broad chimney of undressed stone was built outside, and stood like a tall buttress picturesquely designed for the thatch to lean against and the winding ivy to cling to; the purple-brown boughs of the fading ash-tree dropped upon the roof; creepers hung fading and yellowing about the deep recesses of the windows. The garden, a tiny unfenced patch of ground between the cottage and the stubble-field, displayed a fine crop of the crimson spires of the dock sorrel; sweet-herbs crept about in tangled masses; a solitary pale pink hollyhock grew at the foot of the rough stone steps that led up to the cottage door.

'What do you think so far?' asked Mr. Bartholomew a little anxiously; all the morning he had been more or less anxious.

'So far I think it is charming,' Genevieve answered with enthusiasm. 'Perhaps it is even too charming, since it is not in the nature of things to be consistent.'

'Well, that's just what I'm frightened of,' said Miss Craven, unlocking the door. It opened straight into the kitchen. There was the usual broad grateless hearthstone, elevated some inches above the flagged floor, the usual wide chimney, the usual 'reckon-crook' of the district. A dresser with a half-filled plate-rack stood opposite to the window; a white scoured table, with a few rush-bottomed chairs, completed the furniture of this characteristic apartment.

A door on the left opened into the one sitting-room, which Miss Craven had done her best to make as attractive as might be. And the mid-day sun, slanting through the diamond panes, certainly fell upon some touching evidences of Dorothy's desire and power to make the best of things.

Her finest geraniums—one and all—stood in the two deep

'Yes ; that is it precisely,' said Noel Bartholomew, almost betraying by the glance he gave his surprise that she should understand. 'The mood in which I began it is dead ; I think it is dead for ever.'

Miss Richmond stood silent a moment, looking into his face with a look of intense, concentrated compassion, such as he had never dreamed could be made visible on a countenance like hers. It almost startled him from his indifference.

'The Princess's face is a portrait, then?' Miss Richmond asked, speaking in a subdued tone that was far removed from curiosity.

'It is, and it is not,' the painter replied. 'I had a model—that is to say, a lady staying with us for a few days kindly sat for me. She had a finely picturesque face, pale and sad-looking ; but I tried to idealize the features, partly that she might never be recognised, so that I should not call it a portrait.'

'Could you not finish it if the same lady sat to you again?'

'No, not now. I might finish the figure of the Princess, and I might paint a Kiartan to stand beside it ; but the whole thing would be worthless, and wooden as the chair on which the picture stands. There would be no beauty in it, nor any felicity, nor any life whatever.'

'And you have no hope concerning it—I mean hope for the future?'

'None.'

Miss Richmond again stood silent, with musing eyes turned downward to the floor.

'I wonder how it is?' she said at length, speaking softly. 'I should have thought that the chief idea of the picture, the pain of parting, would have been an idea that you could have recalled always?'

Noel Bartholomew looked up, his eyes seeming to quiver for one quick moment under their lids.

'I can recall it,' he replied slowly. 'Yes, you are right ; I can always recall it, if—if it should ever be absent long enough to need recall.'

'Then I see why you cannot put it into paint,' said Miss Richmond, looking into his face with grave and fervent compassion. To herself she spoke in another and a wilder way.

'I should say it was quite as good a place as the barn that Landseer made into a studio at St. John's Wood,' said Genevieve, following Miss Craven into the big, bare-looking workshop; and, truth to say, it did not promise ill. There was space enough, light enough, and it appeared to be at least weather-proof.

Some business matters between Miss Craven and Mr. Bartholomew were settled then and there, while Genevieve wandered about ankle-deep amongst the tall grasses that were quivering and whitening under the bending boughs. A robin was chirping out his bright autumn notes overhead; apples came tumbling down unexpectedly; some mild-eyed cattle were looking over the hedge.

'I shall design a frieze for the studio from this,' said Mr. Bartholomew, coming back up the path. 'It shall be an interweaving of red-cheeked apples on lichened boughs, and golden-haired maidens by moss-covered wells.'

Genevieve made answer in lively phrase; she hardly knew what it was that she was saying. She was wondering how long it was since she had heard her father speak of any artistic thing he meant to do in such tones as these. True, it was but a small thing—the straw to show which way the current was setting, and the current was setting rightly; so much at least was evident.

How quickly it had all been done! A short walk in the October sunshine, a saunter round a cottage, through an apple-orchard, and the future was determined. Here was a home, a place to live so much life in, work so much work, suffer so much, hope so much, grow so much. Everything looked fair; the fairest looked possible. The outer and apparent narrowness and straitness of things held no threat of a corresponding straitness of soul; rather was it otherwise. Here, if anywhere, was room for a soul to expand to its own full growth, unbruised by contact with souls whose growth means hardening. The very air had promise in it, and the sunshine stirred the veins of life till the mere prospect of living was a bountiful good.

'And now, dear, I have been recollecting myself,' said Mr. Bartholomew when they were once more in the lane. 'I have remembered the fatiguing day you had yesterday, and have decided that you shall go back with Miss Craven, and rest till

We wait and wait, being among the great multitude of the impotent. *They* would help us, as we them, but the feet that halt and the withered hands prevent. Looks pass across, and yearnings. Does God take count of these?

For Noel Bartholomew the healing water of sympathy was stirred to its divinest effect by the man whose mere coming had power to raise expectation, whose mere glance raised expectation to a spiritual certainty.

He was an aged man, a man of thought, a man of prayer, of suffering, of endurance. All this, and much more than this, was written on the pale intensity of his face.

The physical life of the man had never been fully equal to the demands made upon it by the soul's life. The higher had dominated the lower at a fearful expense to the latter. Now, you saw as it were through the tissues of the frame, and you dreaded the effect of the quick flush that mounted to the thought-riven forehead, as you might have dreaded to see the point of a lancet near a main artery.

It had so happened that Canon Gabriel and Genevieve had not met before.

'I have been wishing to come for days past,' he said, taking her hand in his and holding it with a warm friendliness which the girl felt to be very precious. The old man's kind sad eyes, the wistful simplicity of the smile that parted his still beautiful mouth, were expanding her confidence in himself as the sun of a summer's dawn expands the lily till it yields its heart's last secret. Genevieve had no secrets that the world would have called such; but even in that first hour she betrayed the kinship of her soul to a soul that understood.

'I was needing him,' she said to herself when she knelt for her prayer that night.

The clergyman who accompanied Canon Gabriel was, of course, the blushing Mr. Severne, the Canon's curate. He was still blushing. His blush would have been the one distinctive thing about him but for his smile, which was distinctive also. It was an irresistible smile, in the sense of forcing you to smile either with the curate or at him. To ignore it was a physical impossibility. Yet in common fairness it must be added that there was something

Genevieve had the rare merit of being a good listener. Many a time—as now, for instance—she listened for sympathy's sake until she found herself listening for her own pleasure and interest ; for, after all, it was something to know that any fine morning might bring them a neighbour whom it would be good to meet in the intellectual sparseness of Murk-Marishes.

CHAPTER VIII.

BIRKRIGG GILL.

' Yet half I seemed to recognise some trick
Of mischief happened to me, God knows when—
In a bad dream perhaps.'
ROBERT BROWNING.

MEANWHILE Noel Bartholomew was going on his way, suffering a quieter sadness than he had prepared himself to suffer. No agitations beset him as he passed through the 'long unlovely street' of the low-lying hamlet. There was the door where his heart was used to beat ; it was the door of a small dark house under some trees. It was empty now, and falling fast into ruin. This was well.

That past history of his was not romantic, as people count romance in these days. It all passed through his brain in a few moments as he stood there by the little gate that was dropping to the ground for very age.

He had been lodging at Hunsgarth Haggs, painting, studying, dreaming, for two long summers, when he first met Clarice Brooke.

It only seemed like yesterday that he had sat there by the hedgerow sketching rapidly, eagerly, not noting the storm that was coming over the moor. Suddenly it burst upon him. The nearest shelter was the house under the trees ; and before he could enter the porch the door was opened for him by a tall, slight girl dressed in deep mourning, who had evidently been weeping. The tears were wet on her eyelids, even as she smiled her welcome ; and, perhaps, she would hardly have cared to smile at

'I do ; I'm awfully fond of children. But some of the people haven't any ; some of them seem as if they hadn't anything, and didn't do anything that one could talk about. They don't read, they don't think, they don't work, and they don't go anywhere.'

'And they don't gossip?'

'Oh, don't they ! . . . I—I beg pardon. . . . I mean——'

'Severne, come and look at this picture.'

It was the Canon's gentle voice that spoke ; and he added, in the humorous way that sat so well upon his fine gravity :

'I am sure I need not apologize to Miss Bartholomew for relieving her of the burden of entertaining you.'

'Well, I—I don't know,' said Mr. Severne, blushing two shades deeper. 'Perhaps I may have been entertaining Miss Bartholomew !'

'That is eminently probable. But now look at this head. What should you say of the man who sat for that?'

'I should have to think before I said anything. Is it meant for a saint?—a St. John, for instance?'

'That is how it impresses you?' said Mr. Bartholomew.

'Well, it did at first.'

'And now?'

'Now I seem to see some hardness in those hazel-coloured eyes, and there is something very like hardness, too, about the mouth. Still, it is a good face, and it is very—very intellectual. Don't you think so, Canon Gabriel?'

'I think it is wonderful ! wonderful to see a Judas in a face like that !'

'A Judas !'

'That is Bartholomew's idea of Judas ; and I think in future it will be mine. I could conceive of Christ choosing a man like that to be His disciple. There are such magnificent possibilities in the head and face. You say to yourself, That man may be anything he chooses. But it is not a Hebrew type, Bartholomew?'

'No ; it is more Hellenic, and therefore more suggestive of the best that has been, or will be, physically speaking.'

'Exactly ; but one hardly cares for that. It is the power, the subtle inconsistency, the possibility of pathos underlying the hard determinedness. One sees the man who could betray his Master

the pleasure of seeing the Canon, and of meeting you again. I expect that we shall be very dependent upon our neighbours—my daughter and I.'

'Shall you?—shall you really?' exclaimed the young man, opening his blue eyes in surprise. 'I say, that is good news!'

He was blushing still, or blushing again: it is difficult to know exactly which to say. The last impression Mr. Bartholomew had of him was an impression of a deep crimson blush, a smile that was almost a laugh from very nervousness, and an intensely clerical low-crowned hat.

'Nevertheless, there is a charm about the boy,' Noel Bartholomew said to himself as he went onward through the street. He would not go back the same way again. There were ways enough to choose from.

It was afternoon now, but the sun went on shining brightly, warmly. It was like a mild April day with touches of September sadness in it. To a man who had been in London all the summer the feeling of emancipation came with a freshness and a fulness hardly to be comprehended except by experience. The blue air, the soft wind, the silence, the solitude were as so many enchantments, leading him on and on, by field and road and marsh and farm, till his senses were lulled to a kind of dreamful, placid acceptance of all things that were, or had been, or should be. Why make any moan in such a world?

Presently he perceived that he had gone farther than he had intended. It was no matter. There was the path up through Birkrigg Gill to the moor, and he could soon skirt the edge of the moor and drop downward to the Haggs. . . . Was the time seeming long to Genevieve?

So he went on under the yellow leaves, down into the bottom of the Gill, where the beck ran swiftly towards the sea, gurgling round and under the great green boulders, over the many-tinted stones. Glossy fronds of hart's-tongue fern curved gracefully by the water's edge, the scarlet berries of the cuckoo-pint made rich contrast among the various greenery of the undergrowth, the primrose leaves were fading among the dead pine-needles that strewn the ground, rich russet-tinted fir-cones were dropping noiselessly into the soft carpet. The light breeze was hushed

after it has once got in. It may have come in unintentionally, but no intention will suffice to dismiss it.'

'Then that would account for some of the repetitions that one often sees in pictures by the same artist,' said Canon Gabriel. 'But what, or rather who, is this? A St. Agnes, surely?'

'No; I meant that for the nameless sister of Sir Percivale. I used to wonder why Tennyson had not bestowed upon her one of the most beautiful of his beautiful names; now I think it better she should have no name.'

The picture was only a head, only a pale, silken head, with a wan and prayerful face, and eyes with the 'deathless passion' of holiness in them.

It was hung rather high, and Mr. Severne was looking up at it as he might have looked at some marvellously wrought altar-piece. Canon Gabriel was saying softly:

"For on a day she sat to speak with me,
And when she came to speak, behold her eyes
Beyond my knowing of them, beautiful.
Beyond all knowing of them, wonderful,
Beautiful in the light of holiness."

'Would you mind standing there for ten minutes, Mr. Severne?' asked the painter courteously, as the Canon's voice ceased.

'No; I shouldn't mind a bit, of course not,' said the curate, blushing quite the deepest tint that he had exhibited yet. 'Are you going to make a sketch of me? Oh, I say! I should like it, I should really!'

'Then look quite grave, please, quite quiet, as you were looking just now.'

'And we will go up to the cottage and have some tea,' said Genevieve, turning to Canon Gabriel.

'Ah, yes; thank you. That is wise. Severne will never behave as he ought to do if we remain.'

CHAPTER IX.

FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS.

'They out-talk'd thee, hiss'd thee, tore thee ?
Betier men fared thus before thee ;
Fired their ringing shot and pass'd
Hotly charged—and sank at last.'

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

THE weather that one remembers for half a lifetime is always weather that is complete of its kind—the unbroken calm, the unmitigated storm, the time of ceaseless rain, of sustained drought. These are remembered as much by their unity of impression as by their rarity of occurrence.

Genevieve Bartholomew will always remember that first perfect autumn at Netherbank : the clear blue skies that went on being blue quite into December, the pale warm sun that threw long shadows across the grass all day, that lighted up the little house, and lent a new harmony to the soft, restful colouring that was so daintily disposed and arranged. Truly it had been a labour of love, that pleasant home-making, and full of new and unhopèd-for experiences.

'You must feel rather like a bride,' Dorothy Craven said one day, when she came down to see the transformation which had been so quickly wrought, and so cheaply too, for the most part, as Miss Craven saw at a glance. The delicate coral-coloured stencilling on the walls, the curious pale gray-green tints of the drapery that covered the old sofa and the chairs, the quaint festoons of Indian muslin and creamy lace that hung about the little windows, were none of them expensive luxuries. The things which represented money were those that had come across the moor in the carrier's waggon, the books, the pictures, the large screen of ancient needlework, and the soft rugs that covered the floor.

The piano had come later, with some necessities for the studio, easels, lay-figures, canvases. Genevieve saw them come ; she watched her father as he unpacked them and put them in their places. Her feeling as she watched was like an emotion, to be

Mr. Severne would make a good pendant to the sister of Sir Percivale.'

'A Sir Galahad? That is strange! I have had the same notion about him ever since he came. The moment I saw him and heard him speak I thought of the lines :

' God make thee good as thou art beautiful,
Said Arthur, when he dubbed him knight, for none
In so young youth was ever made a knight.''

It is, of course, in Severne's youth and in his goodness rather than in his beauty that one sees the analogy. But if anyone has seen, or may see, the Holy Grail, then Severne sees it.'

'You can say that of him?'

'Yes; I can say that of him. He may not have seen the cold and silver beam stealing through the moonlight, or the crystal Chalice, rose-red with beatings in it; but he has seen all that these things symbolize. The Chalice of the Wine of Charity has touched his lips, and left its odour there; nay, it has gone deeper than that. He is not, I grant it, clever as the world counts cleverness, but he is as willing as St. Paul was to be considered a fool. And what, after all, is the wisdom of the wisest of us?

' "Wouldst thou the life of souls discern?
Nor human wisdom nor divine
Helps thee by aught beside to learn,
Love is life's only sign."'

Genevieve was standing near the fire; her head was raised, her deep, dark eyes were heavy with thought, wistful with strong yearning.

'Canon Gabriel, will you help me, if I begin the quest of the Holy Grail?' she asked, speaking in a tone of timid, child-like humility.

'Certainly, I will help you, my child, if God permit. But I think that the quest has begun for you already.'

with an air of finality. She was in her own house when she said it, an old-fashioned stone house standing back from the main street of Thurkeld Abbas. It was showily furnished, and the lady was dressed to be in keeping with it. The prettiest things she possessed were her little fair-haired twin girls, Edil and Ianthe. They were always brought down when visitors came ; no one perceiving more clearly than Mrs. Caton herself the value of the children, of their pretty hair, their fashionable dress, as picturesque incidents in her life and its surroundings. She was not unpicturesque herself, being a large, white, fair woman with very blue eyes, and a clear knowledge of what was becoming in the way of dress.

It need hardly be said that Mrs. Caton had her place in the established society of Thurkeld Abbas ; nor that her verdict concerning any new-comers would have its due and sufficient weight. Nevertheless, at the moment when her verdict was given it was not received with that respectful acquiescence to which she was accustomed. 'There is nothing in him,' she had said emphatically, and for a moment there was silence.

Miss Standen, an elderly lady, who had been three times to London in her younger days, and twice since her maturity, and who therefore ventured occasionally to have an opinion of her own, put a question to Mrs. Caton. 'Have you seen much of Mr. Bartholomew?' she asked significantly.

The turn of Mrs. Caton's head was something to be remembered. She had seen Mr. Bartholomew once ; and Miss Standen knew quite well that she had seen him once.

'These things are not questions of time,' said Mrs. Caton, speaking in her usual oracular tone. 'They are questions of intuition, of acquaintance with human nature. When I meet a man who talks to me for nearly an hour without saying a single striking or remarkable thing, I cannot say that I think that man to be a man of great powers.'

'Not of great conversational powers, perhaps,' rejoined Miss Standen. 'But does Mr. Bartholomew profess to be gifted in that way? He is an artist.'

'To say that a man is an artist—that is, an artist of any eminence,' returned Mrs. Caton, 'is to say that he is a man of thought,

This was tiresome, as he was wanting to go over to the Bank at Thurkeld Abbas.

He was rather glad when he saw Miss Craven driving slowly, carefully down the white upland. She drew up by the stile, and Keturah ran along the snow-covered field to hold the horse. Dorothy usually stopped at Netherbank to ask if she could execute any commissions 'in the town.' She drove an old white pony and a black gig, a turn-out that commanded a respect in Thurkeld Abbas not always accorded to vehicles of greater pretension.

Somewhat to Mr. Bartholomew's perplexity, somewhat to his amusement, Miss Craven refused to transact his business at the Bank.

'I'll not do that,' she said in her usual brusque way, 'but I'll drive your daughter to the town and back again if you like. I've nothing but myself in the gig, an' I haven't much to do at Thurkeld, only the butter an' eggs to leave, an' the groceries to get, an' a few things to get at Hartgill's.'

'You will let me go, father?' Genevieve asked, a faint glow of delight rising to her cheek as she spoke.

'Why do you ask with such mild emphasis?'

'Because my desire is so strong.'

'Exactly,' said the father, looking at her with solemn comprehension, as his way was.

Then he went to the window. It was easy enough to understand the girl's eager desire to be out there amongst all that new white beauty that was glittering in the sun. Sunshine is always hopeful. After due hesitation a restrained permission was given. Ten minutes later Genevieve was sitting by Miss Craven's side, wrapped from head to foot in furs and shawls, and doing her best to subdue the childlike excitement which was born of the unusual elements in her present and prospective experience.

'Oh, look! look there!' she cried, as they turned a corner of the lane that led down into the village.

There was a tall, ragged hawthorn hedge on the seaward side, and the snow had drifted through the interstices, making such strange forms as surely never snow made before. Giant sofas and couches, tall chairs of quaint shapes, were ranged one behind

be able to feel some natural sense of duty in defending a member of a county family.

Her suggestion was received with incredulous smiles, and the smiles were followed by incredulous words, by words implying more than incredulity. It was a little sad to anyone with eyes open to see the sadness of it all.

Mrs. Damer was not quite sure that her eyes were open : she had an impression that she did sometimes see, that she oftener tried to see, but that her mental eyes were holden by some narrowness of education, of opportunity, of intellectual birthright. She was not sure even of such vision as she had. She knew it to be limited : it might be erroneous. She was certainly aware that she saw things with other eyes than her neighbours saw them, and her nature was such that the effect upon herself was apt to be stimulating. She was nothing if not courageous ; and her courageousness led her sometimes into—shall we say deep water, or hot water? Perhaps either would do.

At the present moment she was listening in silence, but not with patience. Truth to say, she was growing very impatient, and somewhat indignant too. She was not a woman who made any special profession of Christian charity, not more than the other church-going, district-visiting ladies who sat there ; but this absolute uncharity struck her soul's sense keenly. Not one voice had been raised to utter one kindly word concerning these strangers, who had come to make a home in the midst of them. There had been nothing save pre-judgments, disapprobations, hints, detractions. And what ground, what reason had they for it all ? The question burst forth at last with startling unexpectedness.

'What have they done, these people, that we should speak of them as we are doing?' the little woman asked with heightened colour, and a sudden gleam in her eyes. She looked at the lady who had spoken last, then at Mrs. Caton ; they were too much surprised to reply.

'I must speak,' Mrs. Damer went on ; 'that man's face—it would be more polite to say Mr. Bartholomew, but let it pass—his face struck me as being so full of sorrow that I feel compelled to speak. Someone said a while ago that there was nothing in him ; if there is nothing else in him, there is a soul that has gone

determinedly beyond him with fixed eyes, glowing cheeks, and a firmly closed mouth expressive of the deepest mortification.

'T' road's been cut all t' waäy fra Murk-Marishes to Thurkeld,' said Ishmael, remounting and riding by Miss Craven's side. 'Ah com round by Briscoe. Ah was on my waäy te t' Haggs te ask aboot that coo 'at ya said was such a bad milker. But Ah shall be up that waäy again next week, an' we can talk things ower. Ah might as well go back by Thurkeld noo as any other waäy. That's road you're bound, Ah reckon?'

Miss Craven admitted that it was, by the slightest possible parting of her lips. To Genevieve's surprise, this repressive manner had no particular effect upon Mr. Crudas.

'You're not goin' te introduce me te that young laädy then, Dorothy?' he said, glancing past Miss Craven with his small keen eyes. 'Ah sall ha' te introduce mysel', Ah see, an' Ah can do it wiv a good grace an' all, seeing 'at Ah knew both her father an' her mother afore she was born. Hoo dis yer father like livin' at Murk-Marishes, Miss Bartholomew?'

'He likes it very much, thank you,' said Genevieve, leaning forward and answering with one of her rare smiles. 'Perhaps you will call at Netherbank? my father would be glad to see you.'

'Thank ya, miss, thank ya!' Mr. Crudas shouted in shrill delight.

The value of the invitation so graciously given was doubled by the fact that Miss Craven heard it given. It seemed a mere matter of gratitude that Mr. Crudas should ride round to the side of the gig on which Genevieve sat; but another matter was stirring in his brain, or beginning to stir. What if this dainty-looking young lady could be won to sympathy, to help, to the exertion of such influence as she might have with Miss Craven? The thought had struck him on the sudden, and he had been quick to perceive the possibilities it held. Nothing so likely as the unlikely.

'Despert weather,' he began, by way of giving himself time to think how a middle-aged Yorkshire farmer, of rough speech and aspect, might make himself agreeable to a young lady of such perfect manners, such undreamt-of beauty as this. 'Despert weather it's been. Ah don't know 'at iver I heerd tell o' more damage done at one time i' my life. T' papers is full o' nowt but

relief. Yet Mrs. Caton was quite wise enough and clever enough to make the best of things.

'What a dear excitable little woman Mrs. Damer is!' she remarked, carefully re-adjusting the folds of her dress.

'The way she always stands up for absent people is very nice, though,' said Mrs. Pencefold. 'And really there is something in what she said before she went away. I was thinking about the same thing only a few weeks ago when I was at home. We went over to Haworth one day, and we thought ourselves fortunate in meeting with an elderly woman who, when she was a girl, had been in Charlotte Brontë's class at the Haworth Sunday-school. She was an intelligent person, with a good memory, but the burden of her recollections of Miss Brontë was very significant. "She wur allus little an' plain," said the woman in answer to our inquiries. She remembered Branwell's wild ways; she had been well acquainted with the father's eccentricities, but of "Miss Charlotte" there was only the one impression: "She wur allus little an' plain."'

'You must not tell that story to Mr. Bartholomew,' said Mrs. Caton. 'He might imagine that you were intending to be personal.'

CHAPTER X.

'WHO RIDES BY WITH THE ROYAL AIR?'

'Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
I know you proud to bear your name;
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,
Too proud to care from whence I came.'
TENNYSON.

COULD the ladies assembled at Mrs. Caton's have been made aware that while they were putting new life into a piece of old gossip the same story was threatening to repeat itself, it is possible that Mrs. Damer would not have had to leave the house with that uneasy sense of victoriousness.

It was rather an eventful day at the thatched cottage. Some

unappreciated security, while men were crying their last agonizing cries within sight of the place where she sat, was almost intolerable. It seemed as if she had wronged those who had suffered of their due sympathy in failing to suffer with them so far as she might have done. It was as if she heard a voice in the wild wind—a voice asking, ‘Could ye not watch with Me one hour?’ Then the wind fell a little, and the voice seemed to say, ‘Inasmuch as ye did it not to these, ye did it not to Me.’

They were nearly at their journey’s end now. The dark clouds were drifting upwards from the sea; the sun was hidden; the distant moorland was changing from gray to purple-black.

‘Ah doobt t’ daäy’s goin’ to worsen’ on’t,’ said Ishmael Crudas as they entered Kirkgate, the main street of the townlet. Ishmael turned to go his own way, which branched off a little farther down the street, shouting ‘Good-daäy’ to Miss Craven and Genevieve as he went. There was a strange gloomy look upon the face of the houses; the piled-up snow on either side of the street looked dirty and distressful; the people were hurrying about—more people than Genevieve had seen in Thurkeld Abbas before; and it soon became evident that some common cause was making common stir.

‘You know where the Bank is?’ said Miss Craven, as they stopped at the Richmond Arms. ‘An’ what are you going to do till I’m ready? Hadn’t I better call for you at the Rectory?’

‘Yes, thank you; if you will be so kind,’ said Genevieve. She still looked sad and thought-burdened as she turned to go down the narrow street where the Bank was. Marishes Lane was the name of it, and Marishes Lane was the most silent and deserted street in all the place, as a rule. To-day a throng of people were coming swiftly down, talking rapidly, earnestly as they came, and looking into each other’s faces with concern and dread.

‘Has anything happened?’ Genevieve asked of a tall woman who seemed to be trying to cheer a shorter woman who clung weeping to her arm.

‘Ay, miss, there’s anuff happened, if it’s true what folks say,’ answered the woman in tones of pain and excitement. ‘There’s a ship i’ distress just down i’ the Bight here, an’ they say it’s the *Viking*; an’ if it is, my sister’s little boy’s aboard—little Davy

Genevieve looked up, amused in spite of herself.

'You may have the tea ready, Keturah,' she said; 'I will ring for it if we should want it. And do try to open the door for Miss Richmond without looking so very much amazed.'

This caution notwithstanding, Keturah's round eyes were opened to their fullest extent when she reappeared. It was evident that she was proud to find herself ushering in the great lady of the neighbourhood.

All at once the little room seemed to be filled with a strange magnificence. Was it some Eastern queen who was coming forward with such languid, majestic grace, holding out her hand to Mr. Bartholomew, glancing with dark, dreamy, half-closed eyes at Genevieve? She was not smiling; her beautifully curved lips were closed, the under one drawn in like a baby's, making a deeper shadow round her perfect mouth and chin. Her black hair hung low over a wide, dusky forehead; the very faintest colour was stealing through the olive tints of her face as she began to speak.

'You will hardly remember my brother,' she said, presenting a tall young man with fair curly hair, uncertain features, and a general expression of self-approval.

He had a husky voice, and he blushed a little as Mr. Bartholomew introduced him to Genevieve, whom he had seen more than once at Thurkeld Abbas.

Miss Richmond was watching him as she seated herself on a sofa near the window; a subtle perfume was stealing from the folds of her dress of rich Indian silk; the barbaric-looking ornaments about her wrists and in her ears were twinkling and tinkling as she moved. She did not seem to hear Genevieve's polite remark that she was glad to have the pleasure of seeing her.

Diana Richmond sat for some moments without speaking, looking from under her half-closed eyelids straight into Genevieve's face. This might have been a little perplexing, a little oppressive, if Genevieve had cared to find it so; but the girl had only a vague notion that this was an old friend of her father's, to whom she was bound to show a courteous deference. Mr. Bartholomew was talking to Cecil Richmond. Diana, lifting her eyes from Genevieve's face, took a leisurely survey of the room.

'You are intending to remain, I perceive,' she said presently,

semicircle. Some had stood on the very fringe of the sea ; these were wrecked for the most part ; and you saw figures moving through and beyond the slanting rafters that had held the roof.

Others stood dotted about on ledges of rock, on rugged and hardly approachable points, the cliffs having in some instances fallen away on every side, and left the red-tiled dwelling on a rocky islet in the midst of rocks. Some few were ranged together on a shelf at the back of the bay, and on the slope in front there were upturned boats, masts, and oars, the wrecks of lost ships, and other pathetic vestiges of lost lives.

Few details were noticed by Genevieve as she went down Soulsgrif Bank, still holding the hand of the woman who was silently weeping. The Bight seemed to be rapidly filling with swift-moving, apprehensive figures. Some came from the north, some from the south, some were going down with Genevieve and the fear-driven women, who seemed to look to her, if not for help, then, at least, for all the sympathy she had to give. There was an excitement, suppressed as yet, on every countenance ; and every eye was turned strainingly seaward.

At present this seaward view was suggestive only of terror—of angry and awful power. The dark clouds were obscured ; so, too, was the darkly-heaving distance of the sea. Mystery was the keynote of the scene, the mystery of driving storm-scurd—scurd of rain or snow meeting and mingling with the scud of riven, flying surf. The only light in it was a heavy, lurid, yellow light, that appeared to be neither of sun, nor moon, nor stars—a light that seemed to strike upward from the torn sea, rather than downward from the troubled heavens.

Down at the bottom of the narrow rock-bounded road a dozen or more of the fisher-folk of the place gathered instantly about the strange little group of three. It did not seem strange ; nothing was strange save the awful booming of the sea all along the foot of the cliffs, the wild roaring and lashing, the mad bursting and tossing of the waves that stretched in broken heights and shadowy depths across the Bight from Briscoe Point to Soulsgrif Ness. What roar was of the water, and what of the rushing mighty wind, could not be discerned. The sole sound that had distinction there was the shrill crying of the myriad seagulls that had their

it; so had the touch of superciliousness, and a new element had appeared in the place of these.

Was it sympathy? Was it a sudden motion towards friendliness of feeling?

'You are not at all what I have been expecting you would be,' Miss Richmond said, lifting her eyes so as to meet Genevieve's less restrainedly than before.

'You have been thinking of me, then? That was kind,' the girl said. A moment later she added with a smile, 'But will you not tell me what you were expecting; and where I fail?'

'The difference is not in the direction of failure,' said Miss Richmond. 'I should like to speak out plainly—to tell you the truth; but you would not like it, I perceive that. You would think me rude. As a rule I don't mind being thought rude; but for once I do. There would, however, be no vulgar flattery in my telling you that you have already given me a pleasure, and my pleasures are few, fewer than you may think.'

'You are pleased that we are going to stay at Murk-Marishes?'

'Yes; exceedingly pleased. I had made up my mind that you would not stay; and that it would be your fault, not your father's. I imagined that a town-bred girl would never stand the loneliness of such a place as this.' This last sentence was not unpremeditated. Miss Richmond watched carefully how it sped.

'Loneliness!' exclaimed Genevieve unsuspectingly. 'I have never had a lonely hour in my life. Descriptions of loneliness perplex me; I mean the kind of loneliness that is always crying out for human companionship. I do not understand it. Perfect solitude is such a potential thing—so full of influences to which one is never awake in one's social hours. I sometimes think that if I were so placed that I could never be alone, I should sink to a mere clod.'

There was a little silence while Miss Richmond was revolving in her mind the significance of these admissions; that is to say, a certain significance that they had for her. To herself she was saying, 'Then that is evidence enough that you are fancy-free, my golden-haired princess. I wonder at that, almost as much as I regret it.'

On the whole it was a relief when Miss Richmond expressed a

The old man turned, gazing surprisedly at the white, beautiful, eager face, the compassionate eyes before him. He had not heard, or had not understood, the questions. Were they in some strange tongue? Surely it was some message of peace which had been sent to him!

He was wondering silently; a man on horseback was dashing wildly down a steep path between the rocks. The latter stopped rather suddenly as Genevieve was repeating her question in a louder and more deliberate way. She had not noticed him till he drew up.

For a moment he sat silent in the saddle, as if he, too, were half bewildered by the tall, white, fur-clad figure, the wind-blown masses of rippling golden hair, the pale, clear-cut face that was like a sculptor's dream, the dark, wistful eyes of the truest, deepest violet-colour he had ever in his many wanderings beheld. All against his will he was arrested by the unconscious grace, the appealing glance, the intense compassion visible on the face so suddenly upturned to his.

The gentleman raised his hat.

'I beg your pardon,' he said. 'You were asking about the ship. It is there; I have seen it from the moor.' Then he turned to the old man. 'Is anything known about the vessel in Soulsgrif Bight?' he asked of him.

The old fisherman's eyes filled with tears. He had heard what this clear, strong voice was saying.

'I know 'at my son *was* aboard, sir,' he said. 'If he be aboard yet, him an' all 'at's wiv him's despairin' o' their lives.'

'There is no lifeboat here?'

The question was put in quick, decisive tones.

'Noä, sir. An' if there was she couldn't live i' such a sea as this.'

'Where is the nearest lifeboat station?'

'At yon end o' Swarthcliff Bay, sir; six miles to the south'ard. Ah thought they might mebbe ha' seen the vessel as she passed there, but Ah reckon she passed when one o' them snow-squalls was on, if she passed at all. But there's no sayin' where she's been such weather as this.'

The stranger raised his hat as he dashed off again, then he crushed it down over a great square forehead contracted with pain,

'It would hardly be quite correct to say so if you don't admire them,' replied Genevieve, who was a little amused. 'I hope I was not putting any pressure upon your opinion?'

'No, you weren't; so I may as well speak the truth. I don't like statues—never saw a marble thing that I cared for in my life.'

'No! And pictures?'

'Oh, I care for pictures immensely, especially new ones. I ran up to London for three days in June, almost on purpose to see the Academy and the Grosvenor. My word! there was some colour there!'

'There was indeed,' replied Genevieve, repressing a smile. 'And since you care so much for colour, you will perhaps like to see some sketches of my father's. Will you lift that portfolio to the table, please?'

Miss Richmond was not listening to all this. She had but little knowledge of art, and small liking for even such phases of it as she understood. There were studies, sketches, suggestions on the walls that she did not profess to understand; others that she did not pretend to care for. The head of the pale young man on the easel was in nowise to her taste, and Mr. Bartholomew was not anxious to elicit her opinion concerning it. This was a small matter, but she noticed it; she was even aware that he was sorry that the picture was on the easel at that moment.

She turned from it silently. On the wall near it there was an unfinished single figure, a three-quarter length of a Guinevere, seated on an antique couch, draped with emerald-tinted silk. Her face was pale, full of the 'vague spiritual fears' which had come upon her, because

'The powers that tend the soul,
To help it from the death that cannot die,
And save it even in extremes, began
To vex and plague her.'

More care had been bestowed upon the expression, upon the sorrow of the face, the dawning repentance, than upon the actual beauty to be represented by the drawing of rich contours, or tints of pearl and carnation. The history of the sorrow that her loveliness had wrought was insisted on rather than the loveliness itself.

could hear, or perhaps feel, the low ground-tone of despair that came from the hearts of the people standing there.

More than three parts of the wild, wide bay was clear now, clear and cold as blue steel, but no dismasted hull rose darkly between sea and sky.

Some there could have prayed that the cloud might stay now, that its merciful obscurity might rest upon the little space that was left between its ragged edge and Soulsgrif Ness, as once the cloud rested upon the camp of Israel. But it moved onward, it swept past the Ness.

From point to point there was nothing for the eye to see save the great strife of waters, nothing for the ear to hear but the war of the unabating tempest.

Genevieve Bartholomew, with the fearlessness of ignorance, went farther along the beach to where some large masses of fallen rock were lying under the cliff. Two of the aged fishermen, who had turned their backs to the sea, and were standing with pathetic lines of hopelessness about their mouths, with sad, strange recognition of the worst in their eyes, gave her a word of warning as she passed.

'Don't goä ower far that way, miss. T' tide's risin'. When it touches yon steän, the Kirkmaister's Steän, they call it, it's dangerous comin' back.'

'Is it? Thank you. I shall not stay,' the girl shouted through the roar. 'I want to see if I can see anything from that ledge. I am afraid you will think me foolish, but I did think that I saw something just now. There! I saw it again. A black speck on the water!'

The men turned swiftly, something in the girl's eager hopefulness of manner striking chords of responsive hopefulness in them.

There was nothing to be seen, but they knew well that so small a thing as a piece of wreck, or even a boat, might show itself for one moment and then hide itself for many in such a mountainous sea as that. They hurried away to where a group of people were gathering round a woman who had doubtless been made a widow since that snow-squall burst upon the bay. There was a man with a glass in the crowd, and at the first sign he turned to sweep the

Rossetti is to Dante. This picture is, as you see, unfinished. I meant to entitle it "The King's Daughter." It is from the "Earthly Paradise."

'A book I only know by name. I have seen it, of course, but I have never read it. What is the story?'

‘There are many stories; this is a scene from one—a parting scene. The lady is the Princess Ingibiorg; the other figure, which is only indicated, is Kiartan, who does not care for her as she would have him care, but who is yet passionately sorry for her. The beauty of the passage, to my thinking, is the Princess’s sorrow for his sorrow. . . . I have the book here. . . . That is the part I meant to illustrate :

"Alone she was, her head against the wall
Had fallen ; her heavy eyes were shut when he
Stood on the threshold ; she rose quietly,
Hearing the clash of arms ; and took his hand,
And thus with quivering lips awhile did stand
Regarding him ; but he made little show
Of manliness, but let the hot tears flow
Fast o'er his cheek. At last she spake :
 ' Weep then I
If thou who art the kindest of all men
Must sorrow for me. Yet more glad were I
To see thee leave my bower joyfully
This last time ; that when o'er thee sorrow came
And thought of me therewith, thou mightst not blame :
My little love for ever saddening thee.
Love !—let me say love once—great shalt thou be,
Beloved of all, and dying ne'er forget.
Farewell ! farewell ! farewell !'"

Miss Richmond read the lines, not quite to herself, but in low, pathetic undertones, that seemed to lend an intenser meaning to the words. The passage was marked; she did not read farther, but closed the book and gave it back to the painter.

'I should like to see that picture when it is finished,' she said.

Bartholomew was silent for a moment.

'I wish I could promise you that you should see it finished,' he replied.

'Will it take so long?'

'It would take about a fortnight—not more. . . . But it is not a question of time. It is nearly four years since the painting was begun.'

'Really! Then I see; you have lost the—the feeling for it?'

cliff-top some object looming, towering greatly against the sky. A crowd of toiling people were all about it; horses were being moved hither and thither; ropes were being thrown and coiled and bound.

‘My God! my God!’ said the woman who had been praying passionately for her husband’s life. ‘My God! it’s the LIFE-BOAT!’

Even so: it was the lifeboat.

Knowing that no boat that ever was built could round Briscoe Point in such a tempest as that, the captain at the coastguard station had refused to launch the lifeboat, to sacrifice almost certainly the lives of thirteen brave men. It was painful to make the refusal, but even as he made it a thought struck him.

‘I cannot launch her here, Mr. Kirkoswald,’ he said to the gentleman who had ridden in hot haste from Soulsgrif Bight. ‘She would never round the point. But if it were possible to get her overland through the snow she might be launched in the Bight.’

‘Then for Christ’s sake let us try! There are supposed to be six men and a lad in the foundering ship.’

So the trial was made; and the day and the deed will live, as brave deeds have lived in England always. The children of children yet unborn will tell of the cutting of the frozen and deeply-drifted snow over hills and through hollows for six long miles; the painful dragging, step by step, of the massively-built boat, mounted on her own carriage, by men who wrought in silence, in utter obedience, in splendid willingness, with desperate resolve.

‘If you will take command of the men who work on the road, Mr. Kirkoswald, the coxswain and I will see to the boat,’ said the captain of the coastguard to the stranger, who was working already with spade and mattock in the snow. His horse had been harnessed to the boat’s carriage; but it had to be unharnessed, as its owner needed it for the new service that was required of him. It was difficult service, and important; but he was equal to the task, and men who might not speak aloud spoke softly, saying always to themselves, ‘Well done!’

Men and horses from well-nigh every farm on the road joined the band of volunteers; the men working with such a will as they

CHAPTER XI.

CANON GABRIEL.

'But thou and I have shaken hands,
 Till growing winters lay me low;
 My paths are in the fields I know,
 And thine in undiscovered lands.'

TENNYSON: *In Memoriam*.

Two quiet days passed before another carriage containing visitors awoke the wonder that Keturah's round eyes seemed made to express. Genevieve was just going down to the studio with a cup of tea for her father.

'You can show these gentlemen down the orchard,' she said. 'And once more let me ask you to look less amazed. Now don't forget, Keturah.'

'No, ma'am; Ah won't forget. Ah niver forgets nothing. Ah'm a despert deep thinker.'

Noel Bartholomew put down his palette and brushes gladly for once, and for once there was a really glad look on his face. He hastened to meet a friend.

How lightly one uses the word! how one squanders it on the most inadequate occasions, making it do duty for a dozen other words of lesser value that would better far express the lesser meaning!

Year by year, day by day, 'dream delivers us to dream, and there is no end to illusion.'

No end to illusion, no end to hope fed by one's own fire, no end to the darkness that follows when the soul that should have kept the flame of human faith alive turns ruthlessly to extinguish it.

A shattered friendship, if it ever had any fineness, any soul of goodness, any radiance of spirituality, is every whit as destructive of belief in the faithfulness of manhood as a shattered love.

So, if there be any healing waters left anywhere on the earth, any Bethesda Pool where one might be made whole of the wounds that one has had, one may rest assured that these waters lie in the depths of a true friend's soul.

Alas, that the Angel of Pity should have no certain season for his coming!

isn't there !' said Ailsie Drewe with quivering lips and blinded eyes ; and from that time Ailsie had nothing more to say. But she still stood there, braving the cold, and the snow, and the cruel showers of hail.

Near five hours had gone by between the sighting of the dismayed ship and the sudden looming of the lifeboat on the top of Briscoe Bank, but it was only three hours since George Kirkoswald and his Bevis had ridden into the coastguard station at Swarthcliff.

Swiftly, silently, yet with terrible difficulty, the boat was lowered down Briscoe Bank by means of ropes. When it touched the sands of the Bight there was a burst of strong, subdued, yet almost overpowering emotion. Tears, sobs, prayers, broken words of hope and consolation, revealings of long-suppressed affection, warm claspings of hands that had never touched in friendship before—this was the choral music of humanity set to wild accompaniments of storm-wind, and the deep full bass of the furious wave.

Swiftly, and as silently as might be, the lifeboat was manned, the brave sea-soldiers buckled on their buoyant armour, set their pale-blue lances athwart the rest, and turned to face the foe with hearts as brave, as disdainful of danger, as any that ever beat in the breasts of the chivalrous knights of ancient repute. Chivalrous !

‘ I do distrust the poet who discerns
No character or glory in his times,
And trundles back his soul five hundred years,
Past moat and drawbridge, into a castle-court,
To sing—oh, not of lizard, or of toad
Alive i' the ditch there—'twere excusable ;
But of some black chief, half knight, half sheep-lifter.’

If Homer had seen Ulysses and his men launching a nineteenth-century lifeboat straight out into the very middle of the breakers that surge and dash upon the North Sea coast during a hurricane, we had had another epic to set our hearts a-beating to its diviner theme.

George Kirkoswald was a poet, not quite mute, not quite inglorious ; but it was hardly to be expected of him that he should see the poetry of that day's deed while his best strength was set to

about the man that saved his smile, his blush, and himself from any touch of ridiculousness—a something that day by day commended him more warmly to Canon Gabriel's affectionate regard.

It could hardly be said that his desire to please was more evident to-day than any other day. It was always evident, and always combined with touching little doubts about his success. The doubts were not expressed except by blushes, which were more expressive than any words he had at command. Before five minutes were over he was openly deploring his limited vocabulary. Only Genevieve was listening. Mr. Bartholomew and Canon Gabriel were discussing other things.

'I—I don't know whether it's worst in one's sermons, or in one's parish work,' said Mr. Severne ingenuously. 'And when I think anybody is listening who—who minds about it, I get awfully nervous.'

'Do you? That is a pity. But I should think you could not feel nervous at the schoolroom service at Murk Marishes. The people there seem as if they would be so very unexacting.'

'So they do, as a rule. But now and then other people come, more—more educated in a way.'

'Are you meaning me? I was there on Sunday afternoon.'

'Yes; so you were. But you sat behind the stove-pipe, and——'

'And you were grateful to me for sitting behind the stove-pipe?'

'Well, I was,' admitted Mr. Severne, blushing and laughing with real enjoyment of the position. 'If you'd been looking at me I should have felt ever so much worse.'

'Then you may rely upon my not looking at you in future. There is no necessity for it. There is so much to be seen from the schoolroom windows. But you must promise me not to think that my attention is wandering if you see me looking out of the windows.'

'I—I should be glad if I could think it was wandering—then perhaps you wouldn't find out that I was wandering; it is so difficult to keep to one's subject. But even that is not so difficult as visiting in the parish. I never know what to say—especially first when I go in.'

'Couldn't you ask after the baby?'

This was awakening. Turning to retrace her steps, she saw with a sudden sinking and sickening of heart that the yellow, yeasty waves were tossing the long tangle of the very stones she had passed over—it seemed to her only a few minutes before.

Was it impossible to reach the sands?

Another daring, greedy wave, another thud against the perpendicular wall of rock, another clash of the recoiling wave and the advancing one, another cloud of heavy spray—these things made answer.

She was standing there, holding by the jagged edge of the rock. She afterward remembered looking up at it, noting its curious linear fractures, its manifold tints of black and green, of russet and blue, of various brown and amber; she remembered distinctly the thought that it might be the last thing her sight would rest upon.

Presently she closed her eyes, praying for deliverance, if deliverance might be. If not . . .

There was naught to be heard through the roar of the storm. There was a smothered cry down on the beach by the water's edge, where the people had gathered after the lifeboat had been launched. Genevieve did not hear it. She had been standing farther forward by the angle of the jutting rock when she discovered her danger. She could be seen as she stood there, a tall, white figure against the black rock; and Ailsie Drewe had been the first to see her—the first to raise that startled cry of dismay.

It could only be a few seconds that elapsed before Genevieve was conscious of a dark form dashing through the white whirl of spray, of a strong arm thrown round her, holding her firmly through a fierce shock, a drenching, blinding shock of water. Then she knew herself lifted, borne on. . . . For a little while she knew no more.

It was a very little while, not more than a minute or so; she doubted, indeed, if consciousness had ever really left her, it grew suddenly so quick, so keen, so full of shame, so full of gratitude. All at once she was herself again as she stood there surrounded by the little group of helpful women who had left the crowd—she hardly saw them in that first moment. Her eyes were lifted to the face of the man who had risked his life for her life. It was only a

for a paltry price; but one also sees the man who went and hanged himself because his remorse for so doing was greater than he could bear.'

'It has always been terribly perplexing to me,' said Genevieve. 'I cannot comprehend the alternations of feeling that must have understruck both motive and action.'

'You will comprehend it better when you are older,' said the Canon. 'Such alternations are as sadly possible to-day as they were eighteen hundred years ago—as possible in Murk-Marishes as in Judæa. There are doubtless people who can love and hate the same persons by turns; and who can feel either passion with equal violence.'

'They must be very miserable people,' said Mr. Severne, who had a habit of putting hypothetical cases to himself, and was wondering at that moment whether he could ever come to dislike Miss Bartholomew.

'I think you said this head was only a study,' observed the Canon. 'You are going to paint a picture from it?'

'Yes; the picture is begun. It is here—this morning's work still wet. I am not satisfied with it to-day.'

Mr. Bartholomew was unwise enough to turn his canvas, so that his visitors could see his work. It might be that he had a motive in so doing.

'Oh, I say! how curious!' Mr. Severne exclaimed. 'It is the same, the Judas over again, and yet it is like—like someone else. Don't you see, Canon Gabriel?'

'I hardly know what I see yet,' said the Canon, speaking more cautiously. 'It is so very unfinished.'

'So it is; the hair isn't done, and all that; but if it had been darker, and had had black hair hanging over the forehead, I should certainly have said it was Miss Richmond. But it is strange; it is so like the Judas, too!'

'You are rather a stupid boy,' said the Canon, drawing the young man's attention to another sketch, and perceiving with some satisfaction that the painter was amused rather than annoyed.

'It is curiously difficult sometimes,' said Bartholomew, 'to catch a likeness; but it is often equally difficult to get rid of a likeness

would at least be anxious? Did he understand how she had come there; how she had longed to be at hand to offer sympathy, to be of use, to tend and help others rather than be tended herself? Could he comprehend her disappointment and humiliation? All this was behind that one glance that George Kirkoswald answered with a smile as he went out. It was the smile of a man who smiled rarely, and it was strangely moving, strangely sweet for a face so strong and sad.

It passed from his face very quickly. The little door of the inn opened straight on to the low quay. As he went out he saw quite distinctly the lifeboat struck by the heaviest sea she had encountered yet. It fell like an avalanche, well-nigh swamping the boat, and breaking six of her oars. 'They snapped like straws,' said one of the men afterward, a man whose arm had been disabled by the same stroke. Two other men were hurt; the boat was not manageable against the wind; there was nothing for it but to turn back for reinforcements of men and oars. A whole hour's rowing at full strength in such a sea as that had exhausted the powers of the lifeboat crew to a considerable extent, and it had been fruitless.

A low sound that was half a cry passed through the crowd when it was made clear what had happened. The storm was still raging with its wildest fury. The little boat was still in sight. Six long hours it had tossed there between Briscoe Point and Soulsgrif Ness.

CHAPTER XVII.

'SIT STILL AND HEAR THE LAST OF OUR SEA SORROW.'

'Love's not a flower that grows in the dull earth,
Sprints by the calendar; must wait for sun,
For rain; matures by parts—must take its time
To stem, to leaf, to bud, to blow; it owns
A richer soil, and boasts a quicker seed!
You look for it, and see it not, and lo!
E'en while you look, the peerless flower is up,
Consummate in the birth!'

KNOWLES.

GENEVIEVE, watching from the inn window, could see all that was happening out there in the infuriate storm. Another snow-squall

CHAPTER XII.

SIR GALAHAD.

'A maiden knight—to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.'

TENNYSON.

'YOUR father's imagination seems to be recovering its activity,' said Canon Gabriel when they reached the sitting-room. There was a cheery fire burning: a smell of turf came from the kitchen; a breeze was stirring the ivy-leaves to and fro upon the diamond panes; the low sun threw long rays between the flower-pots and across the cosy little room.

'I think his imagination has been active all the while,' Genevieve said thoughtfully. 'Perhaps only too active. It was the power to realize the things he saw that had gone from him. The misery of it was in that.'

'The power, not the will?'

'No; not the will, never the will. It was strange. I can hardly explain, though I think I understand. It seemed as if he had not power to obey his will. I have known him will to do a thing, and compel himself to do it, but none knew better than he knew the utter worthlessness of it when it was done. And people did so torture him. They could not understand. I believe the world looks upon the production of art, or of poetry, as upon the production of so much bricklaying.'

'But you are happier about your father now?'

'Tremulously happy.'

'Ah! I see.'

'It is a kind of crisis. So much may depend upon so little just now.'

'What sort of idea should you think he has about Mr. Severne? I mean what sort of artistic idea? He seemed struck by something.'

Genevieve smiled softly.

'I think my father's idea would be the same as mine—that

Genevieve heard it. She ran out from the little inn, down the half-dozen steps of the quay, away over the wet, shingly slope. The old man to whom she had spoken first when she came down to the Bight was there. He took her hand and pressed it, tears were streaming down his furrowed face.

'Oh, my honey!' he exclaimed, 'they're saved! they're saved! It's a mericle! a mericle! as much a mericle as if they'd been rose fra the dead!'

'Ay!' said another ancient mariner, '*Ah* niver thowt te live te see the daäy when a boät 'ud be built te swim in a sea like that!'

Some of the people made way for the young lady who had stayed with them so long, and sympathized with them so keenly. Words of hers, comforting, consoling, had been passed about from lip to lip during the day; and her kind face and unassuming ways had opened hearts that were not opened too easily. Though she never came into Soulsgrif Bight again, she would not be forgotten there.

She saw the one figure she desired to see; he was helping to lift the rescued men out of the lifeboat—pale, helpless, exhausted men, who could not even look their gladness or their gratitude. One was lying back with closed eyes, another had torn hands, torn with clinging to the little boat, but they were too much frozen to bleed. Another had a broken arm, which hung down when he was lifted.

Ailsie Drewe's little lad had been lifted out almost first, lifted into his mother's arms, but he lay there quite stirlessly. There was no sign of returning consciousness as he was carried home; no sign when he was laid on the sofa by his mother's fire. Genevieve had left the beach with those who had carried him. She was there in the cottage helping others to chafe the frozen limbs that had been covered quickly with hot blankets; helping, too, to keep up the mother's fainting hope.

'The child breathes—he breathes quite naturally,' she said, bending over the wet, yellow curls to kiss him as he lay. He was only a little fellow for his years, and he looked so fair and sweet in his death-like pallor that she could not help but kiss him. In after-days Ailsie used to tell him, smiling sadly as she said it, that

CHAPTER XIII.

MR. ISHMAEL CRUDAS INTRODUCES HIMSELF.

'That day was full of rumours sad, of boats swamped out at sea,
Guns booming in the offing, and wrecks strewn along the shore.'

HILDA : *Among the Broken Gods.*

'T' SNAW's allus driftin' ower Langbarugh Moor.'

It seemed as if the burden of the old man's strain was about to work its own fulfilment.

The bright cheery autumn weather came to an end quite suddenly. Where the yellow glow had been, a thick, white snow-fog spread, the hollows between the lands of the stubble fields were filled with a cold blue haze, the distant dark edges of Usselby Craggs were shrouded, a piercing wind began to blow, the last leaves went flying from the trees, and the bare boughs agonized in the pitiless blast.

Late one night the broad white flakes began to fall. Genevieve, looking out from her window under the eaves, saw them flying past in the blue-black darkness made visible by her lamp. They swept horizontally, like morsels of detached, embodied lightning.

Next morning the world beyond the cottage was obliterated ; it remained obliterated for several days. Down in the hamlet people were saying that there had been no such snowstorm since the winter that Joseph Craven lost his sheep and Matthew Christie his life.

After a time there came a pause in the descent of the snow. The frost remained intense for some days, and the wind, at times, high and squally ; but at length a really fine-looking morning broke—a keen and clear morning. The sky was of the deepest, coldest steel blue ; all along the seaward horizon great wild clouds were driving rapidly, but every now and then broad rays of sunlight shot across the cold white world, making the day seem serene if you only looked landward. It was tempting to anyone with a desire for outdoor air, but Mr. Bartholomew had threatenings of bronchial troubles, not new to him, and therefore to be dreaded.

she added, 'And yet I think I did—I think I have known it all day since that first moment.'

All day! It was only a fragment of a day in truth, and yet it was half a lifetime.

Surely if she had never seen this man before, then he was one whom she had long desired to see; she had heard of him, or read of him, until the impression had been made, that he had to-day confirmed. It was he who had mingled with all her past inner history; it was he about whom all that was best and highest in her estimate of humanity had gathered; it was he to whom she had turned for guidance when thought was confused, for help when knowledge was darkened, for support and sympathy when the days were heavy with unsuspected burdens. He had been part of her past life, as certainly as he was part of the present; and her future was bound to his, though she should never see the greatness and the goodness that was in him looking down from his eyes into hers again till her life should end.

She hardly thought consciously of the deeds he had done that day as she stood there. They were only a part of himself; and, being himself, he could have done no other. Yet doubtless the acts had disclosed the man more plainly than years of uneventful intercourse would have done. And it was not only the thing done, the manner of doing it made evidence also, and there was no touch there to mar the fine consistency of the impression.

There was a lighter feeling in the cottage by this time; the little lad was sitting up, leaning against a pillow and sipping some tea. Rough, uncomely faces moved smilingly across the firelight. Ailsie looked pale as she sat by the sofa. She was rocking herself to and fro, as if the weight of dread and sorrow were loth to leave her, and full deliverance hard to recognise. She was not ungrateful, poor woman! but her gratitude lay trembling under dread possibilities, awaiting a freer moment for expression.

Presently the boy spoke, and his mother bent over him.

'Yon's him 'at pulled me oot o' the water,' he said in a faint voice, and indicating Mr. Kirkoswald as he spoke.

'Yes, and it was more of a pull than anybody would think to look at you now, my man,' said George, coming to the side of the little patchwork-covered sofa, and stroking the yellow curls that

another, each with its end to the hedge, all the way along the road, precisely as furniture might have been arranged in a vast show-room. The sight was unique enough to be remembered for a lifetime, but it was not an easy matter to drive through or by this strange display of freaks. Miss Craven was very careful; her old pony was patient and willing, but nervous withal, and the aspect of things was beginning to be less amusing, when the figure of a horseman was seen approaching.

'There!' said Dorothy, with a quick, keen flush of annoyance.

'Was ever anything more vexin' than that?'

'Is it someone you know?' Genevieve asked.

'Know! Yes, more's the pity. It's Ishmael Crudas. You'll have heard your father speak of him, I reckon?'

'Yes,' said Genevieve, blushing too now, for very sympathy; 'my father told me a little—only a very little. He said that perhaps it would be a pain to you if you thought I knew more.'

'Pain! It's all pain together. But I don't mind your knowing. I mind nobody's knowing. Some day I may tell you myself, maybe.'

The horseman approached. He was a gray-haired, keen-eyed man, in later middle age, with a complexion as ruddy and as fresh as it had been thirty years before. Evidently he was a well-to-do man; everything about him, from the sleek, dark dappled gray he rode to the sound quality of his rough topcoat, bespoke the prosperous, thriving Yorkshire farmer.

'Well done, Miss Craven!' he shouted at the top of a shrill and somewhat penetrating voice. 'You've about gotten through t' worst on't; but mebbe Ah'd better lend ya a hand as far as t' Wheätsheaf, so as you mayn't turn reproachful, an saäy 'at Ah've got t' best on't. Steady! Grizel, steady!'

Miss Craven protested, in tones almost as shrill as his own, thus making it evident that her interlocutor was rather deaf, as indeed anyone might have guessed from his manner of speaking. Apparently her protestations were carried away by the wind, which was boisterous at times. Mr. Crudas dismounted, led his own horse with one hand, and guided the uncertain steps of Miss Craven's pony with the other, Miss Craven meanwhile looking

'I meant 'twas my oân fault for goin' doon below when they were gettin' ready te leave the ship.'

'Then why did you go?'

'For the mate's pictur'. . . . He didn't tell me, but Ah knowed he'd miss it. 'Twas his wife's 'at's just dead a month sen.'

'And you went below to get that?'

'Ay, an' Ah got it, an' Ah kept it a bit after Ah was i' the water. But it got washed oot o' my belt.'

'How long did you stick to the wreck after the boat had drifted away?'

'A good bit—an hour mebbe. Then she began to go doon, starn foremost, an' Ah fastened myself te the life-buoy—the captain told me te stick te that buoy a long time before, when the masts went by the boârd.—Then Ah jumped off fra the bow, an' tried te swim te the boât, but t' sea were ower heavy.'

That was all that Davy Drewe had to tell. George Kirkoswald knew the rest. He had called the attention of the coxswain to something floating on the water before they reached the little boat, and that something had proved to be the widow's one son, tossing there in the storm-swept sea, exhausted, half frozen, yet fighting even then for the young life that was in him.

Davy's tale was hardly told, when a neighbour came with the startling news that a carriage with two horses was to be seen 'in the street.' No one there had ever seen a carriage in Soulsgrif Bight—there was not a horse in the place, nor was there a road that any ordinary animal could be expected to climb.

'Since it is impossible the fly should come to you, I fear you must go to the fly,' said Mr. Kirkoswald.

Genevieve was putting on her cloak and hat, the women were helping her, thanking her. Davy Drewe was looking at her with childishly open admiration.

'Will you come an' see me again?' he asked, holding out his small frost-stiffened hand.

'Yes; I will, indeed,' she said. 'We ought to be friends. This gentleman has saved two lives to-day—your life and my life. . . . We must remember that, Davy.'

'Were you goin' to be drooned?'

'Yes,' interposed George Kirkoswald; 'Miss Bartholomew ran

disaster—disaster by sea, an' disaster by land. Ah reckon it's been as bad aboot here as onywhere. They say there's ower thirty wrecks lyin' ashore atween Shields an' Scarborough, an' more ships missin' nor folks knows on yet. Did ya hear tell 'at Ah'd seen a vessel go doon mysel' night afore last?'

'You saw it?' asked Genevieve, turning paler and looking out to the dark horizon, where the sea was still heaving under the frowning heavens.

'Ay, Ah saw it, an', so far as Ah know, nobody else saw it. She turned ower all of a sudden, an' came up again bottom upward, parted clean i' two, like a 'bacca-pipe. Then she disappeared, an' there wasn't as much as a spar left floatin' 'at Ah could see; but 'twas gettin' on for nightfall. Ah'd been out all t' daay. Ah niver can rest i' t' house wi' t' signals firin' an' t' rockets roarin' i' that waäy. Ah watched the savin' o' three ships' crews fra the top o' Swarthcliff Nab that day; an' Ah helped a bit i' savin' other two.'

'Were they saved by the lifeboat?' Genevieve asked.

'Some by t' boat, an' some by t' life-lines,' answered Mr. Crudas. 'There was a woman fetchd ashore i' the cradle, poor thing! ower such a boilin', ragin' sea as Ah reckon you niver saw. She was the last but one te leave the ship. She stuck tiv her husband—he was t' master, an' he stuck tiv his vessel till all t' rest o' t' crew was saäfe. Then t' line wi' t' cradle an' t' life-buoy was shot oot again, an' just as t' poor fellow seemed to be puttin' one foot into t' cradle, he was blawn clean owerboard,—eh, but it was an' awful minute that! There warn't a shadow of a chance i' such a sea. He battled aboot a bit; sometimes one could see him, an' sometimes one couldn't, tho' he was nobbut a few yards fra t' shore. I heerd a cry, a terrible cry; it's i' my ears yet; but whether it was the drownin' man or his wife, Ah don't know to this minute. They said she saw him go.'

'And all this was just here, and we did not know!' said Genevieve. 'I thought I heard a gun once in the night; but I did not know what it meant.'

The girl stopped. She was growing paler and paler as her keen susceptibility was wrought upon more deeply by the thought of the seeming carelessness and indifference in which she had been living through the storm. The idea of sitting in safety, in warmth, in

riding on before the fly, stopped at the Richmond Arms until Miss Craven came up, to ask whether he might not send his man over to take the trap up the snow-covered roads to Hunsgarth Hags in the morning. Miss Craven yielded to this, but not too readily. Some transferring of parcels took place; Mr. Severne shook hands with everybody, and went away, smiling, blushing in the dim lamplight. Something had delighted him, some other thing had perplexed him; but he was not very clear about his sensations as he went homeward. Mr. Kirkoswald was riding forward again, and he did not stop till he reached the stile by the cottage at Netherbank. He dismounted there.

'I may call to-morrow to inquire how you are?' he asked, walking by Genevieve's side along the frozen field-path. The wind was still boisterous; a few silver stars shone keenly out between the clouds. There were lights in the window of the little cottage.

'Thank you,' said Genevieve, with unhesitating grace. 'I shall be glad to see you; and my father will be glad to have an opportunity of thanking you. . . . You will not give him the opportunity now?'

'I am afraid I may not, thank you. I must go up with Miss Craven, as the roads are so bad.'

He waited a moment by the foot of the tiny flight of steps. Keturah opened the door with an exclamation. 'Good-night,' said Genevieve gravely, standing a moment in the glow of the light that came from the kitchen fire. 'Good-night. . . . There are so many things that ought to be said that I am unable to say any of them.'

'I am glad you have not tried to say them,' answered George Kirkoswald, with a deep intentness in his tone. 'There are things that are much more permanently contenting to me unsaid.'

Drewe. An' it's nobbut his second voyage, poor bairn ! An' he is a bonny little lad, miss, an' sharp as a bree.* But don't take on so yet, Ailsie. Wait an' see. God's been good to thee so far. Don't take on so till tha knows the worst.'

Genevieve had turned, for the women still hurried on as the tall one spoke. The younger one, hardly knowing what she did in the sudden bewilderment of her grief, put out her hand to Genevieve, who took it warmly between her own. She could think of few words that held any comfort, and these few were difficult to utter in the strong wind that seemed to be growing stronger every moment. When the little town was left behind, as it was before Genevieve became aware of the fact, there was no protection. The blast swept the wild-looking scene, bending the leafless trees ; driving the untrodden snow over the cliffs in steamy clouds ; blowing through the thin garments of the women, who were hurrying in groups along the bleak white road that led down into Soulsgrif Bight. 'Come wi' ma, come wi' ma !' the younger woman entreated when Genevieve paused once in the lane. 'Come wi' ma, and see the last o' my little lad !'

And again it seemed to Genevieve that there was a voice in the blast that went sweeping by.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHO EVER LOVED THAT LOVED NOT AT FIRST SIGHT ?

'At length I saw a lady within call,
Still than chisell'd marble, standing there ;
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
And most divinely fair.'

TENNYSON : *A Dream of Fair Women.*

THE scene in Soulsgrif Bight disclosed itself quite suddenly from the turn at the top of the cliff. It was a wild scene, and impressive ; and the sounds that dulled and deadened the hearing were at least as impressive as the sight itself.

The houses which composed the little fishing hamlet at the foot of the cliff were ranged somewhat after the fashion of an irregular

* Bree = briar.

differed from Juliet's in respect of impatience; from Elaine's in respect of simple and beautiful self-abandonment.

Her nature was too rare, too fine and strong, to die for need of another nature; but by reason of these very qualities her need of love once wakened would become the one passionate need of her life.

Her need of love! It had never existed till now; and now it was one with her need of an atmosphere for her soul to breathe in.

All day there was with her in the room a new light, a new strength, a new reason for living life at its very best.

It was a sunny day, clear and keen, and calm with the strange calmness that only comes after a wild sea-storm. The snow was still lying white upon the great sloping upland, under the clumps of dark fir-trees, over all the wide, low-lying land that stretched between the rugged slope and the sea.

Everything was still, so still that a footfall on the frozen field made echo enough in the little house to stir the pulse to quicker movement. Genevieve was ashamed for her blush, when the door opened and Mr. Kirkoswald came in—afraid lest her heart's secret should blaze itself in the heart's colours on her face. How tall and strong he looked in that little room! He seemed to fill it with his impressiveness, with the finely careless dignity that he had when he moved and spoke.

'I see that it is a mere matter of courtesy to ask you how you are,' he said, looking into her face with a grave and kind intentness. 'Are you really no worse for all that you went through yesterday?'

'Thank you, no—not any worse,' Genevieve replied. 'I should like to have gone down to Soulsgrif Bight again to-day if I might. I wish so much to know how Davy Drewe is, and the others.'

'They are all right—that is, as right as one could expect,' replied Mr. Kirkoswald with compassion in his tone. 'Poor Verrill couldn't have his broken arm set till this morning. He looks the worst of them all; but Dr. Seaton says he'll come round in time. Davy Drewe was sitting on a stool by the fire, whistling "Sweet Dublin Bay," and cutting a model of the hull of the *Viking*. . . . But there! that is stupid of me! I was not to mention the model.'

'I see!' said Genevieve, smiling. It was a dreamy, lingering

home in the rocks to the north. For Genevieve Bartholomew there was an added terror in their defiant scream, which every now and then subsided into a mocking chuckle as the birds passed boldly near. It was as if some malevolent storm-spirit swept by on its wicked wing.

The two women with whom Genevieve had come down from Thurkeld Abbas were the daughters of a drowned man, the widows of drowned men, the sisters of drowned men. All they possessed—the means of life itself—had come to them from the sea; the self-same sea had taken from them all that made life worth having. Ailsie Drewe would have said 'nearly all' a day or two before, believing that her boy was safe on board the *Viking*, then, as she supposed, taking in coal at Newcastle for Dieppe.

The news that a schooner, believed to be the *Viking*, had been seen drifting past Briscoe Point, disabled and dismasted, was the first news that the poor woman had had of the sailing of the ship. She knew at once that it must have sailed before the coming on of the storm. Where had it been during the awful days and nights of veering wind and changing, tempestuous sea, that it should now be drifting helplessly northward again?

More than one of the men assembled there had seen the hull of the disabled ship as it rolled and laboured past the point. The mainmast had snapped off a few feet from the deck; some three or four figures gathered about the bows was all that could be discerned through the darkness and mist of the edge of the snow-squall.

Two of the men on board—it was hoped they were on board—were Soulsgrif men. Their wives were there in the Bight, and their little children. One white-headed old man stood alone, covering his face at times with his sou'-wester while he prayed for the last son that the sea had left him. Had it left him? Was he there, midway between the frowning heavens and the angry sea? The old man was walking on, still alone, still praying, still keeping his eye fixed on the changing, threatening distance. Suddenly he heard a voice beside him, a gentle, sweet, anxious voice, trying to speak so that it could be heard above the storm:

'Have you seen the ship? Do you think it is there? Do you think it *can* be there?'

CHAPTER XIX.

ART AND LIFE.

'The world is too much with us ; late and soon,
 Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers :
 Little we see in Nature that is ours ;
 We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon !
 This sea that bares her bosom to the moon ;
 The winds that will be howling at all hours,
 And are up-gather'd now like sleeping flowers ;
 For this, for everything, we are out of tune ;
 It moves us not.'

WORDSWORTH.

THE door of the studio was open. Noel Bartholomew had heard voices, and he stood there quietly eager to welcome the man who had saved his daughter's life. He looked wan and tired ; and it seemed to Genevieve that his scant and ill-arranged gray hair was even grayer than she had believed it to be. He was, as usual, very grave and very calm.

His first words were, of course, words of gratitude. They were not many, and they were quietly said ; but his emotion was apparent, even to the point of giving pain. This was only for a moment, however.

'It is an ill wind that blows nobody good,' he said, recovering himself. 'And I must not forget that I owe to yesterday's peril the pleasure of seeing you here to-day.'

'I should, of course, have given myself the pleasure of coming sooner or later,' said Kirkoswald. 'I hope I don't interrupt your work by coming this afternoon ?'

'On the contrary, you are doing it a service by preventing my working with a tired eye and a still more tired brain.'

'I suppose most artists are tempted to do that ?'

'I believe so ; and I believe that the greater the unfitness for work the stronger the fascination of it—that is, of continuing it. It is so, at least, with me. It is easier to put my palette down in the middle of a successful morning's work than at the end of a doubtful day.'

'That I think I can understand,' said Kirkoswald, who seemed

with strong resolution. His firm mouth was strenuously compressed ; his large dark-brown eyes were lighted with the determination of effort, rather than with hope of that effort's success.

Genevieve looked after him, feeling as if some hope had gone with him, some help and strength. Certainly the cold wind was colder, the dark heavens darker ; surely the white snowflakes that were beginning to sweep upward from the sea, swept in more pensive accord with human loss and loneliness than ever snow had swept before.

'Do you know that gentleman's name?' she asked of the old man, who still stood near.

'Noä, laädy ; noä. Ah don't know what they call him. He'll be a stranger hereabouts, Ah reckon. He seems keen set o' something. God keep him fra harm an' ill !'

'Amen !' said the girl, audibly and reverently.

CHAPTER XV.

IN PERIL ON THE SEA.

'Oh ! I have suffer'd
With those that I saw suffer : a brave vessel,
Who had no doubt some noble creature in her,
Dash'd all to pieces.'

SHAKESPEARE : *The Tempest*.

NEARLY an hour after the gentleman on horseback had passed swiftly through Soulsgrif Bight, and away up the cliff to the southward, there was a slight change in the aspect of things. The wind veered a little ; the snowstorm began to clear away to the north.

Every eye in Soulsgrif Bight was fixed upon the riven lurid edge of the moving cloud.

It went on moving, moving over sullen, dark, blue-black waters fretted with leaping tongues of white foam, tongues that leapt hungrily one upon another because nothing else was there for them to leap upon. There was nothing else from Briscoe Point to the riven cloud-edge that went on moving away.

Even above the desperate thunder and boom of the sea you

'Would you mind explaining to me more exactly what you mean?' he asked.

'First let me explain,' interposed Mr. Bartholomew, with a quietly humorous smile that was more visible in his eyes than about his mouth. 'My daughter has the misfortune to have inherited strongly Puritan tendencies, tendencies that have skipped over one generation if not two, and are now displaying themselves all the more strongly for the lapse. . . . Proceed, my dear ; inform Mr. Kirkoswald that deep in your heart of hearts you believe all painting, all sculpture, all secular poetry and music, to be so many snares of the Evil One.'

There was a distinct silence. Genevieve's face was turned a little toward the fire, as if she were looking into it for some thought or word that she wanted.

'I am sure that your father has stated the case from the extremest point he could find to stand upon,' said Mr. Kirkoswald, speaking in a tone that betrayed both his interest and his appreciation of the difficulty.

'So he has,' said the girl, turning a grave uplifted face toward him. 'But I will not say that he has gone beyond the truth. I *dare not* say it, lest my words should come back upon me.'

There was no smile now on the face of either listener ; one face had a touch of surprise.

'Perhaps, if I may venture to say so, you are suspending your judgment at present?' Kirkoswald said.

'It has been in a state of suspense ever since I began to think at all, and I see no prospect of any conclusion to the matter. Lately, I have let it rest.'

'Or, rather, it has let you rest,' said her father.

'Exactly. Coming to Murk-Marishes was the hoisting of a flag of truce.'

'Which I suppose you do not consider equivalent to a declaration of peace?' inquired Kirkoswald.

'No, I do not,' said Genevieve. Then she added more gravely, 'I think that peace for me would mean the death of one of my two natures—the artistic, or what my father terms the Puritan. So far as I can tell, they are both very much alive ; though at present they have no reason for clashing.'

angry water in which it seemed so little likely that anything could be and live.

Yet not one full minute had passed when the cry, half glad, half full of anguish, swept across the Bight : ' They've ta'en to the boat ! God help them ! they've ta'en to the boat ! '

For the moment everyone had seen it for themselves. Away beyond the seething, desperate, madly-plunging surf a vast ridge of water had risen slowly, bearing on its unbroken crest a tiny boat with six dark figures visible against the cold, clear sky. ' Heaven help 'em ! ' said the man who had been watching them through the glass. ' Heaven help 'em ! There's some on 'em stripped to swim. '

Even as he spoke the boat disappeared. A great white crest with a flying mane swept up between, seeming as if it broke into the blue ether that was changing to green. There was no murmur in the crowd, no cry ; only a breathless, heart-swelling silence.

Could nothing be done—nothing, nothing ? It seemed to Genevieve as if no one asked the question. She did not know as they did that in such a sea as that the question was an idle one. The probability was that the boat would never reach the broken surf : if it did its buffeting would soon end.

' An' it's hard to perish within sight o' the reek o' your own chimna,' said a lame man who passed on crutches. Only a year before he had been washed ashore, senseless, stunned, and maimed by the wreckage of the ship he had sailed in all his life.

Genevieve, mindful of the warning that she had received, went upward toward a nearer ledge of rock, which seemed to offer even better chances of observation. No one noticed her now, every face being turned seaward, waiting for another glimpse of the boat, if it might so be that another glimpse was to be had.

None knew better than the simple fisherfolk of Soulsgrif Bight that the extremity could never come that should find God's arm so shortened that it *could not* save. Some prayed silently, some aloud ; some prayed, not knowing it was prayer they offered. Miracles had been wrought in Soulsgrif Bight ; and doubtless miracles would be wrought there again. Why not now ?

Suddenly, very suddenly, the painful, breathless silence was broken. A woman looking southward saw on the snow-covered

any human feeling for whatsoever things are lovely, or pure, or beautiful, or true.'

'So far I am one with you,' interposed Genevieve. 'He who said, "Consider the lilies," and declared that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed as they were, could never have desired that any human being should pass through the world with eyes closed to its marvellous loveliness. But we were not speaking of natural beauty.'

'No, we were not,' said Kirkoswald, appreciating the effort to keep him to his argument. 'But to reply to what you said just now, how many people have passed through the world with eyes closed to every glory of sunrise and sunset, who have never been awakened to one tender thrill by the rustle of green leaves, the ripple of a brook, or the sparkle of sunlight on a summer sea! How many have gone down to their graves careworn, toil-stained, crushed out of life by the burden and heat of the day, who have never once in their whole long life felt the sweet influence of

"The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills!"

If Art had no other mission but to minister to the needs of such as these, it would still have a most glorious and decided right of being. And therefore it is that I look upon a true artist as upon a true steward of the mysteries of God. He is not more nor less than an interpreter—a revealer to common eyes of nature, the "time-vesture," woven that man may have some ever-visible token of the nearness of his God.'

'You are listening, my daughter?'

'Yes, I am listening very willingly,' said Genevieve; 'and also gratefully.'

'Oh, please don't be grateful!' entreated George Kirkoswald. 'That sounds as if I had made no impression at all. I should like to make an impression, if it were but a slight one, so that you may be the better prepared to listen to the Reconciler when he comes.'

'Don't make light of it, please.'

'Certainly I will not. And, indeed, you are right; it is not a light matter in these days. Everyone who can think at all is taking it more or less seriously; and, so far as I can discern, there

had never in their lifetime brought to any labour of their own. Massive snow-drifts disappeared, hewn away in heavy blocks; the horses strove in the shafts—as many as eighteen being yoked at one time in places where the road was steep, or the snow imperfectly cleared. No difficulty stopped or stayed this little force of brave Yorkshiremen, as they struggled forward and ever forward on their merciful errand. Even the men who knew that for them the worst was yet to come, the braving of the terrible sea after the terrible toil on land, even they spared not themselves; no, not even when the lifeboat stood on the top of Briscoe Bank, and was seen towering there by eyes that could only see through tears; welcomed by voices whose words of greeting were choked and overpowered by sobs. Strong men wept as the ringing cheers at length passed upward through the deafening roar of wind and wave; but their weeping had to be brief. The end was not yet.

CHAPTER XVI.

COMIN' THROUGH THE SPRAY.

'Then, do you know, her face looked down on me
With a look that placed a crown on me.'

BROWNING: *The Flight of the Duchess*.

THE day was passing on, the tide was rising, the awful foam-white walls of sea that were rearing and dashing in Soulsgrif Bight were growing more appalling in their dread tempestuousness with every hour that went by. The spray of the waves that struck the foot of the cliff flew upward in curling, twisting columns, the lighter masses staining the white snow on the cliff-tops, the heavier falling back and mingling with the flying surf that was obscuring all sight of the rugged blackness of the rocks at the back of the Bight.

The little boat with the shipwrecked crew was still there, tossing outside the breakers. It could be seen from time to time for a few seconds. When it had been first seen, six figures had been visible against the clear cold glare beyond. 'Then my little lad

growth largely to the greater spread of art and poetry, under the head of poetry including the prose poems of such men as Dickens, such women as Mrs. Gaskell. : . . But there ! again I shall have to be brought back to the subject.'

'No, I won't bring you back any more to-day,' Genevieve said. 'I have a feeling that I did not state my own case effectively in the beginning.'

'Therefore my victory has been an easy one.'

'You are feeling victorious ?'

'On the whole, yes. But it modifies the feeling to be told that you did not bring your full strength against me. Will you do your worst next time ?'

'I will do my best,' said Genevieve.

'And may I be there to see !' said her father, restraining the smile that played about his face, lighting up its sadness with an almost pathetic light.

CHAPTER XX.

THE MISTRESS OF YARRELL CROFT.

'Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slipt away,
And while she made her ready for her ride,
Her father's latest word humm'd in her ear,
"Being so very wilful, you must go,"
And changed itself and echo'd in her heart,
"Being so very wilful, you must die."'

TENNYSON.

THE thaw that followed that heavy snow was a very prolonged affair : some time had to pass before the Bartholomews could return the calls of some of their more distant neighbours. It was not an unhappy time—it was too full of life and work to be unhappy. Whenever there was light enough Noel Bartholomew wrought at his beautiful *Ænone* ; or, if Mr. Severne came, he worked a little at the *Sir Galahad*. When the light failed he would read, or draw in black and white, or sit and dream. Sometimes he would read aloud to Genevieve whilst she sat at her embroidery ; sometimes in the firelight they would sit and talk.

help the doing of it. For a long while after the launching of the lifeboat he saw nothing but the desperate strife it had. No eye there saw aught save the boat, its swift forward leaping, its downward plunge into the trough of the sea, its perilous uplifting and suspension on the curling crest of the mountainous wave, its perpendicular rearing as it rose, its dread descent as it fell, its human reel and shudder under the shock of a mighty blow, its sad submission to the drenching, bursting wave that half filled the hollow between its planks, the swaying, the rocking, the tossing, the threatening, the hard, strong, desperate striving—how should any eye turn from the appalling fascination of a scene like that?

Genevieve Bartholomew saw it all, not knowing how she dared to see, not knowing or dreaming what she might yet see. For her the scene was as strange, as utterly unimagined, as it was touching and overwhelming. She was still alone, still on the sloping ledge of shale where the rock curved a little to the southward. She was utterly heedless—a native of the place would have said reckless—of the waves that were hissing below her, seething at her very feet, sending flying showers of spray all about her. How could she fear a few flakes of foam in such an hour as that, when men were fearing not to risk their lives, fearing not to face death at such odds as these?

She was not saying these things to herself; she had forgotten herself altogether. She had no thought but for the safety of the souls there in peril—the lifeboat crew, and the crew of that lesser boat which every now and then came into sight for a second or two, and then disappeared in a way that sent a thrill through the girl's whole being, suspending every faculty of life with dread and pain. More than once she had to turn and hold by the rocks behind her for support when the *aura* of fear had passed over her; it seemed to leave her strengthless, and this was a new sensation. It never occurred to her that exposure, need of food, keen anxiety, could have much effect of any kind.

Still she stood there in the curving of the rock, a little sheltered from the wind, and a little sheltered from observation. The surf was still flying about her; it began to fall more and more heavily; and at last the edge of a wave burst upon her with some force.

visible on canvas. I should try to make it visible ; it would elude me ; and I should be left with the consciousness of having spent my strength for nought.'

There was another brief pause, then another question came with effort :

'You like him, father?'

'Yes, I like him.'

'You don't say that heartily.'

'Don't I? Shall I say it again, and put more heart into it?'

'There! that is satire. We will not speak of Mr. Kirkoswald again to-day.'

* * * * *

Another afternoon—a pale yellow afternoon—the fly came from Thurkeld Abbas to take Noel Bartholomew and his daughter to Yarrell Croft. It was a large, massively built, gray stone house, standing half-way down the slope where the upland curved to the west. The roads about it were well kept, the leafless trees were tall and stately, and they were so grouped as to look picturesque even in their leaflessness. In front of the house there was a portico with pillars, and a double flight of broad stone steps.

Miss Richmond was in the drawing-room. She was alone when they went in, sitting there, gracious and graceful, in a dress of ruby velvet. She was like a picture in its proper setting now. The yellow light outside seemed to give value to the rich furniture, the glowing draperies, the blue and crimson and gold of the painted and diapered ceiling. Genevieve could not help wondering what Miss Richmond had been doing, and of what she had been thinking as she sat there in the midst of so much magnificence. There was no sign of any book or work. The grand piano was closed. The luxurious-looking cushions, strewn about so profusely, seemed to be the only thing in actual use.

Miss Richmond was very quiet, very impressive, perhaps even more impressive than usual. Cecil, coming into the room, seemed as if he hardly understood his sister's mood. He watched her furtively for a time ; then he ceased to watch, or to try to understand, but he went on wishing that she would be more cordial to Miss Bartholomew. Genevieve had not missed any cordiality. She was listening to Miss Richmond, wondering about her life.

look she gave, no word, but it repaid him—he knew that on the instant ; it repaid him a thousandfold.

The day was eventful, but that one look was the event of the day for him.

'You will come with me?' he said authoritatively. He was always authoritative, always most courteously commanding in his manner. He drew Genevieve's arm within his own, made it rest there, accommodated his movement to hers, and went up the beach to the little inn with quite ordinary gravity and composure. There was a fire blazing, provision made for any half-drowned man who might reach the shore, a woman waiting to do what might be done. She was rather amused than concerned by the brief history of the lady's drenching that Kirkoswald gave.

'Strange foälsks doän't understand, ya see,' she said, removing Genevieve's dripping fur paletot, and the little white fur cap with its limp feathers. 'They don't understand ; an' Ah've seen 'em that ventur'some 'at Ah've been fair 'mazed. But all's well 'at ends well ; an' Ah reckon you're nut much woss, miss, by t' leuk o' ya ?'

'Thank you, I am not any worse myself,' said Genevieve, glancing at the dark, wet figure beside her, who stood watching her with quiet concern.

'You'll be thinkin' o' yer cloäk,' the garrulous woman went on. 'Ah's frightened mysel' 'at it'll dry rather hask,* wi' t' saut water, an' it'll be a pity. It's a bit o' bonny graithin',† if 'tis rether kenspac ;‡ but it becomes ye well. Ah said so to Marget this mornin'.'

Genevieve listened in amusement. George Kirkoswald was turning away ; his work outside was not yet done.

'I will come back presently,' he said. 'Meantime you will have something to eat, please ; and you will oblige me by remain ing here until I can arrange for your return to Murk-Marishes.'

Genevieve looked up with a quick blush. He knew her then, or, at any rate, he knew something about her. Was he aware that she had left Miss Craven, who would be both perplexed and angry, at Thurkeld Abbas ? Did he know that she had a father, who

* Hask—harsh, unyielding.

† Graithing—clothes, household goods, etc.

‡ Kenspac—conspicuous, too easily recognised.

a year or two ago—the man came back : he had been abroad for years ; and with him came all my friend's sorrow. It had all to be lived and endured over again. She is enduring yet. You might think it would kill her, but it will not. She is very strong. She will live and suffer for a lifetime yet. And the man does not care. They often meet. He must see it all, but he cares nothing—nothing for the lifelong martyrdom that he has brought about.'

Suddenly—while Miss Richmond was speaking—there flashed across Noel Bartholomew's brain the remembrance of the conversation that had passed between himself and Miss Craven on the first night of his arrival at Hunsgarth Hagg. He glanced towards Genevieve, but she did not understand the glance. How should she ? Miss Craven and her father had spoken of a dozen people, all of whom were only names to her. How should she remember that George Kirkoswald's name and Miss Richmond's had been mentioned together ? And if she had remembered, how should she have suspected—as her father did—that Miss Richmond's friend and Miss Richmond's self were one and the same, with historical variations.

'And after all it is only a suspicion,' he said to himself during the long drive homeward from Yarrell Croft—it was very long and very silent, and the silence was less comprehensible than the silences between the father and daughter usually were.

Two days later the thick yellow sky changed to a clear, vivid, frosty blue. Noel Bartholomew was divided in his mind as to how he should make the most of such a day. Finally the expression on his daughter's face decided him. He would leave his mournful Ænone, and go down to Soulsgrif Bight to sketch a wreck washed ashore during the last night of the storm—the night after the day on which George Kirkoswald had spent his strength and risked his life to save the lives of others.

It was not only Kirkoswald's chivalrous courage that was moving Bartholomew to have faith in him. Doubt thrust itself in ; echoes of Dorothy Craven's words came back ; remembrances of Miss Richmond's emotion ; but Noel Bartholomew was not a man to be unduly influenced by such evidences as these against his own better judgment. 'There has been nothing in Kirkoswald's life

was looming and threatening in the distance ; the coxswain of the lifeboat was calling out for fresh hands—they were there with fresh oars, all waiting ready. Among those who put on the cork jacket for the second attempt George Kirkoswald was foremost. Was it a fancy, or did he really glance up from under those heavy frowning brows of his toward the window of the little inn ?

Another moment and they were out again in the great white upheaving world of water. It seemed as if the roar of the gale were rising to a shriek as the squall came on. The mingled sleet came down, rain and snow one minute, rain and stinging hail another. You looked, and the lifeboat was visible through the slanting scud, leaping, plunging, quivering ; the men bending forward on the thwarts under the deluge that was pouring over them, clinging for very life. Again you looked, and there was neither boat nor men to save, neither boat nor men to be saved. All was rage, dread, white fury, black despair.

For an hour, a whole long hour, that seemed as ten, Genevieve stood there by the window. The childish sense of wrong-doing that had haunted her all day was gone now. Everything was gone but one strong desire.

She would not have said it to herself, she would not have dared to say that one man's life was more than another ; but it was one man's face that came before her when she prayed, one man's voice that rose above the others when the cry of drowning men seemed to her tensely strung nerves to come mingled with every shriek of the gale.

At last, through a break in the thick, yellow-gray mystery, it was seen that the lifeboat was being rapidly driven shoreward again. Another minute and it was seen that she had more than her crew on board.

No voice was heard in that suspense. If any spoke, even to God, he spoke silently.

Not till the lifeboat actually touched the beach, slanting downward on a seething wave, did the cry reach the shore :

'ALL SAVED !'

Across the Bight it flew, amid the roaring and rattling of the hurricane.

'All saved ! all saved ! all saved !'

she asked, the smile dying away from her lips as she spoke, and a grave look coming into her eyes. 'I sometimes wonder how I can ever forget that moment !'

'I think I don't forget it,' George Kirkoswald replied, speaking intently, but as if he spoke to himself.

Mr. Bartholomew was walking forgetfully away with Ishmael Crudas toward a group of people who were gathering round the wreck that was about to be sold by auction.

There was a little silence. Mr. Kirkoswald and Genevieve were standing on 'the staith,' as the people termed the wooden quay. The sun was shining, in a pale, wintry fashion, over the blue sea that was only just stirred by a light breeze ; the wavelets broke far out over the purple-brown reef that was all broken into long lines by the strips of standing water which reflected the pale blue of the sky. Russet-red anchors were lying half embedded in the sands ; a strong sail lay riven into strips of canvas a few inches wide ; a tall mast was there, with broken yards clinging to it ; half buried underneath there was a ship's lantern and a tea-kettle ; a little farther on there was a curving piece of the back of a violin standing out of the sand.

'You will not care to go down to the sale?' said Mr. Kirkoswald. Turning to look at Genevieve as he spoke, he saw that her eyes were filled with tears. 'You had better come and see Davy Drewe,' he added with gentleness, moving to go as he spoke. 'Davy has been wanting to see you for days past, and I am beginning to have a notion that he holds me responsible for your non-appearance. . . . Would you like to go and see him now?'

'Yes,' said Genevieve ; 'I should like it very much. But will you tell my father? He may want me if he is going to sketch.'

'I will tell him while you talk to Davy. I should like you to stay there awhile, in the cottage, if you will. You are not used to scenes like this.'

It was all quite natural—this care, this protection, this deep understanding kindness. It was as natural as if it had always been ; and yet it had the tremulous surprise, the quick, quiet, palpitating gladness of a new and unhopèd-for joy.

There were only Ailsie Drewe and her little lad in the cottage on the hillside. Ailsie was knitting, and she might not stay her

a lady's kiss had kissed him back to life. Certainly it was strange that his blue eyes should uncloze just as the kiss was given. He looked up, at first vacantly, then, as his eyes met his mother's, with recognition. But they were very heavy eyes, and they soon closed again. Was the lad remembering how and where they had closed last?

There was a tale to be told; and by-and-by a gentleman came in, hoping that he might be there when the boy told it. Perhaps he had also another hope.

'I trusted that you would be here, Miss Bartholomew,' he said.

'I have taken the liberty of sending to the Richmond Arms for a fly; it will be here presently.'

'Thank you,' Genevieve said, feeling again a confused sense of wrong-doing—a still more confused sense of wonder as to what this stranger was thinking of her.

'I must explain to you,' she said. 'I came to Thurkeld Abbas with Miss Craven this morning, and I promised to wait for her at the Rectory. . . .'

'Instead of which you ran away?'

'Yes,' replied Genevieve with a sudden smile, perceiving quickly that she had no need to fear misconstruction. 'Yes; I suppose it might be put that way.'

'I think you ought to look sorry.'

'Don't I look sorry? I should say then that must be because I look afraid. I believe I am very much afraid of what Miss Craven will say. It is so late; it will be dark very soon.'

'Don't be apprehensive,' said Mr. Kirkoswald, changing his tone to one of greater kindness. 'I will see you safely home, if you will allow me; and after that I can easily take care that Miss Craven comes to no harm that I can avert. I shall go back by the moor.'

Again Genevieve looked up with the sudden inquiry in her eyes that had amused him so much before; but his instinctive courtesy was stronger than his amusement.

'If you do not know my name, I ought to tell it to you,' he said. 'It is George Kirkoswald, and I live at Usselby Crag; therefore I have the pleasure to be your neighbour.'

'Thank you,' Genevieve said; 'I did not know.' To herself

had been done to it. T' oäd man was sa queer, ya know. He warn't nowt ov a gentleman; nut like this. He'd a seeght o' money, so they said; but he were as greedy as sin; t' sarvants used to tell on him goin' doon into t' kitchen, an' cuttin' a talla candle into three, an' givin' owther on 'em a bit yance a week. An' they warn't alloo'd noä supper. He turned ivery sarvant there was off t' spot one winter, acause they'd roasted some 'taties unbeknown tiv him.'

'But had he no wife?' asked Genevieve, who could hardly in any way connect George Kirkoswald with such a home-life as this.

'Noä, honey,' said Ailsie Drewe, slipping into the word of endearment unawares, as homely Yorkshire folk will do, when their hearts are won. 'Noä, honey. His wife died when this gentleman was born; that mebbe was how t' oäd man came to be sa despert straänge. An' he was straänge! Ah remember once when Ah was nobbut a little lass goin' about wi' t' Kessen-mas waits to sing; an' we went trampin' all t' way up to Usselby i' t' snaw an' darkness; an' what did t' oäd teästril* do but throw up his winder, an' fire a gun right in among us afore we'd fairly gotten started wi' "*God rest you, merry gentlemen!*"'

'Oh, imagine it! Was anyone hurt?' Genevieve asked in amazement.

'Noä, honey, so it happened. We ran off, despert frightened; an' we niver went there no more. T' oäd chap died; an' t' son were sent away to school; an' it's but little we've heerd on him doon here till t'other daäy. I hope we'll be seein' and hearin' more on him noo. He seems to take a sight o' interest i' poor folk; an' it's nut what we're used to fra t' quality hereabouts. They're despert hard, mostly. If they buy a bit o' fish they'll beat ya doon i' price till ya scarce can see yer oän again.'

Davy was sitting still, waiting, looking wistful; but when his turn came he had very little to say; he could only smile and change colour, and push his yellow curls nervously away from his forehead when Miss Bartholomew spoke to him. He was going to sea again, he said, after Christmas. The owners of the *Viking* had another ship almost ready to sail.

* Teastril—a violent or boisterous character.

yet had the salt sea-water in them. 'I want you to tell me how you came to be in the water. Your captain says there must have been a mistake somewhere. I have heard his account, which is puzzling.'

'Twas my oän fault—at first,' said the cabin-boy.

'So it seems. Captain Unwin expected that he was the last to leave the ship—he says that he could hardly see through the spray and foam who was in the boat, and who was not. Then, just as he was about to cut the rope he saw you on the deck of the hull, and called to you as loud as he could to look sharp, instead of which you cast the boat adrift, to the dismay of everybody in it. The captain thinks you must have known that they had not the smallest chance of getting near the wreck again to take you off.'

The little lad looked pale, his lip quivered, a tear or two gathered on his eyelids.

'The captain said that?' Davy asked. 'He said he shouted "Leuk sharp"?'

'Yes; what did you think he shouted?'

'Ah thowt he said, "Let go the rope!"'

'And you let it go?'

'Ay, sir; Ah let it go.'

There was a silence in the little cottage. The lad's simple, heroic obedience—obedience to a command which, as he heard it, must in its very horror and cruelty have struck him with a sudden bewilderment—was too great and grand a thing for spoken praise. A sob broke the silence; it was not Miss Bartholomew who was sobbing. Her face was white and intense, but there was a smile on it.

'What did you think when you saw the boat drifting away?' she asked of the cabin-boy.

'Ah didn't think nothin', miss.'

"His not to make reply,
His not to reason why,
His but to do and die,"

quoted George Kirkoswald with a light in his grave eyes.

'And now tell me what you meant when you said it was your own fault?' asked Kirkoswald.

said? Genevieve was saved from further embarrassment. Kirkoswald, with a glance that might mean mere gratitude, went back to where the white easel gleamed upon the dark reef. Genevieve went forward to the village in the rocks; happier than when she left a little while before.

* * * * *

An hour later they went up Soulsgrif Bank together, Genevieve, her father, and George Kirkoswald. The two men were talking over certain suggestions that had arisen out of the day's events; Genevieve was silent, and her face told of a certain amount of sadness.

'You have not been accustomed to what clergymen's wives term "parish work,"' said George Kirkoswald, passing round to her side.

'Then the result of what you believe to be my first attempt is visible?'

'Not the result, but the effect upon yourself. . . . It is very saddening, I admit, even in a place like this, to feel your way right into the lives of the very poor.'

'I thought I knew,' said Genevieve. 'I thought I understood it all better. I have read about it and thought about it, but one has to see, to meet it face to face, to know how deep it goes; how entirely suffering and endurance is their life; how it enters into everything, the food they eat, the clothes they wear, the beds they lie on, and the fires they burn. And what strikes one is the quietness one finds everywhere, the extreme patience. I have been talking to an old woman over seventy years of age, who has never once in her whole long life known what it was to be sure of the means of existence for a week beforehand. And that woman's temper is as sweet, her faith as whole, as if she had never known an ungratified desire.'

'That I can well believe,' said Kirkoswald. 'One fancies sometimes that such people must see farther than they seem to see; that they must feel unconsciously something of the influence of the wider laws of the world's onward movement—laws that compel them to take their part in the great human sacrifice that is always being offered up for the wheels of progress to pass over.'

'Do you think they dream of that?' asked Genevieve. 'Ah, it is such a hard thing to remember, to realize! And yet I believe,

some risk of being drowned because of her anxiety to see that you were saved.'

'You'll be thinkin' Ah'm a thankless woman, sir,' said Ailsie Drewe, when Mr. Kirkoswald offered her his hand at parting. 'But it's noan thanklessness; it's nut knowin' what te saäy, nor how te saäy it. Ah feel as if Ah'd like te lay down my life for you, if so 'twere to be 'at you wanted it.'

'Then that is certainly not thanklessness,' said Mr. Kirkoswald.

Genevieve did not hear what other reassuring words he said. There was more knocking at the cottage door, more people coming in. Surely that was Miss Craven's bonnet! And quite as surely that was Mr. Severne's low-crowned clerical hat immediately behind it!

'Oh, I say! We simply thought you were lost, Miss Bartholomew,' said the curate, pressing forward. 'We've come down in a fly, Miss Craven and I; *the* fly—there isn't another in the district; and somebody else had ordered it, but it was coming down here, and we insisted on coming with it. Oh, really! Is that little boy ill?'

Explanations followed, interspersed with introductions, inquiries, disapprobations. Miss Craven was very austere, very determined that her displeasure should not be made light of. She accepted Mr. Kirkoswald's politenesses as if they were justly her due, having an instant suspicion that he might be in some way to blame.

So much attentiveness to a quite unimportant stranger would be very likely to arise out of a sense of culpability. Then, fortunately, it occurred to her that in the eyes of a man of Mr. Kirkoswald's learning, the Cravens of Hunsgarth Hags might not, after all, be such very unimportant people. He would know something of their ancient standing, and he would comprehend that, though a family might come to be represented for all practical purposes by one unmarried woman, that family was still entitled in her person to such respect as would have been paid to it under more fortunate vicissitudes. This made matters plainer, Miss Craven's mood lighter, and the homeward journey certainly easier in consequence.

The darkness came down suddenly; the lamps were lighted in the streets at Thurkeld Abbas. Mr. Kirkoswald, who had been

indifference ; and no two people taking any trouble to get nearer to each other. And yet these very people . . .’

‘Won’t you finish what you were going to say?’ asked George, drawing a little closer to her, and lowering his voice somewhat.

‘I was going to say that those very people will, at least every Sunday, declare that they believe in some future life, and that one of the joys of that life will consist of bright and fervid and intimate intercourse with others—“Communion of Saints,” we term it. But who are the saints? And in what is it supposed the communion will consist? . . . I think sometimes that if we don’t begin it beforehand, begin with small and poor beginnings here, we shall never continue it elsewhere.’

‘Then you don’t consider that it is something of the nature of a solecism to introduce religious topics into ordinary social intercourse?’

‘Religious! What precisely is religion?’ asked the girl passionately. ‘Is it going to church on Sundays? Is it singing hymns? Is it even the scrupulous praying of one’s daily prayers? Is that all that it means for us—all that it can be made to mean? If so, keep it silent, then; keep it straitly in its place. If it might be made to mean something less pathetically unhopeful, less unprofitably dreary—if, for instance, it might be made to mean a more carefully beautiful human life, with finer and higher sympathies and manners for every-day uses of life; if it might suggest a quicker and more keen-sighted compassion for unobtrusive sorrows, a less cruel contempt for uncomprehended failure and mistake, a less open and sickening worship of wealth for wealth’s sake, a stronger and more fervent desire to lessen but for one day, one hour, some small part of the great crushing burden that we help to lay upon the hapless shoulders of others—if religion might but ever so remotely mean these, or any of these, then, in God’s name, let us speak of it; and we shall cease to dread the commission of that unpardonable sin, a social solecism.

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George Kirkoswald had a long and lonely walk before him after he had said ‘good-bye’ to the Bartholomews at Netherbank. Lately he had grown a little tired of walking alone; or so he

CHAPTER XVIII.

JULIET OR ELAINE?

'Love at first sight is the surest love, and for this reason—that it does not depend upon any one merit or quality, but embraces in its view the whole being. That is the love which is likely to last—incomprehensible, indefinable, inarguable-about.'—SIR ARTHUR HELPS.

GENEVIEVE had spoken quite truly when she told Miss Richmond that she was not lonely. She had an active brain and active fingers. The tiny house needed careful and constant mindfulness; the study offered occupation; Keturah required a considerate supervision. Then, too, she had her piano, her embroidery; there were letters to be written, books to be read; for sympathy and society she had her father; for the solitary hours which she had always enjoyed there was the moor, the reedy marsh, or the wide sea-shore. 'I wanted nothing,' the girl said to herself, 'and yet it seems as if I had wanted all.'

It was but natural that a day so eventful as that stormy day in Soulsgrif Bight should cause a great reversal and upheaval in the existing order of things, especially since that order had, undeniably, been of a simple and settled kind. It was almost inevitable that thought should linger on such a day; that thought should turn to reverie, and muse upon it; that musing should grow creative, and build upon it.

Juliet's musings on the balcony took form, and kindled into a guileless yet forceful confession of love, though not a hundred words of Romeo's had fallen upon her ear:

'Romeo, doff thy name,
And for thy name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself!'

Elaine spoke less, and less passionately, in her first sudden love for Lancelot; but—

'All night long his face before her lived,
* * * * *
Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence, full
Of noble things, and held her from her sleep.'

Genevieve's love resembled both these, and it differed from both. It resembled them in suddenness, in completeness; it

CHAPTER XXII.

‘I CRY YOUR MERCY—PITY—LOVE! AY, LOVE.’

‘Scorn me less
For saying the thing I should not. Well I know
I should not. I have kept, as others have,
The iron rule of womanly reserve
In lip and life till now.’

MRS. BROWNING.

A WINTER’S afternoon, with a clear, deep-blue summer sky; a low sun slanting across the Marishes, making dreamy picturesque effects where you least expect to find them. A few stray cattle stand among the dead reeds; little pools of blue water reflect them. In the stubble-fields at Netherbank some great gray Royston crows jerk solemnly about; a flight of field-fares rush past; Genevieve’s pigeons come whirling down from the cote, and perch on the top of the old draw-well.

In the little sitting-room also there is an atmosphere of quaint and quiet beauty. The sun slants across the room, lighting up Genevieve’s shining hair, and her pale, attentive face. It rests, too, on the soft silver-white hair of Canon Gabriel, who is speaking.

‘And you think, then, that so far as you can see, the plan has answered?’ the Canon asks, in a tone of deep interest.

‘Yes, so far as I can see. But I am never quite sure how far I do see. And my father needs, what I believe most men of genius need, someone to see for him, to think for him—that is, so far as thought of anything but his own work is concerned. If he can concentrate his whole force continuously upon that, it is well with him.’

‘I see; but when the thread gets broken . . . ?’

‘Then that particular thread is broken for ever. . . . He has not touched one of the pictures that were begun before—before my mother died.’

‘And is the work that he is doing now as good as the work that he was doing then?’

Genevieve hesitated a moment; then she said, lifting sad eyes to Canon Gabriel’s face:

smile that played about her beautiful mouth. Was she recognising the human promptings by which this new-found friend was led? A little silence followed; it was as if her beauty were weaving a spell that a man might hardly dare to break unadvisedly.

Was it only her beauty? George Kirkoswald asked of himself as he sat there. Was it only that she made a picture as she sat before him with her faultless face, her crown of soft, shining, yellow hair, her deep, violet-gray eyes? She had on a dress of warm white serge; there was some lace round her throat, and a string or two of coral beads. No detail that went to the making of the whole escaped him; but he knew that for him the spell was in none of these. The face itself, lovely as it was, did but seem the human expression of some lovelier spiritual ideal.

Suddenly Genevieve recollected herself, and a burning blush of self-accusation spread over her face and throat.

‘Shall I tell my father that you are here?’ she asked; ‘or will you go down to the studio?’

‘Which would he prefer?’

‘I don’t know; I don’t think he would care much; but I should like you to go down to the studio, if you will. I have been thinking,’ the girl said, speaking with her usual unconventional honesty — ‘I have been thinking that I should like to show you some of his work.’

‘And I have been wishing much that I might be permitted to see it,’ replied Mr. Kirkoswald, also speaking honestly.

They went out together, down through the leafless orchard. The twisted trunks of the trees were throwing long blue shadows across the snow; the old moss-green well was sprinkled with diamonds, the hedges were bright with scarlet rose-hips, a robin was swaying lightly up and down on a brown apple-twig. Far away beyond the snow-covered pasture-lands you could see the dark blue-gray sweep of heaving waters.

any word she said. Already it was becoming evident that she was in one of her 'desperate tranquillities.'

As usual, she was dressed with a studiously careless magnificence. She wore a purple silk dress, which made her look paler than she was, and the white shawl which she had thrown artistically about her shoulders added yet more to the look of pallor, almost of suffering, that was upon her face. She threw her hat aside, as she had a habit of doing, on every possible and impossible occasion, knowing that she could afford to dispense with the shade of it. Her thick, dusky hair, curving downward over her forehead, made sufficient shade to add intensity to her eyes, had they needed adventitious aid. But they did not; they were dark enough, changeful enough, inscrutable enough, for any ordinary uses of life.

She sat upon a low sofa, over which Bartholomew had thrown some antique embroidered stuffs that he had been painting from. One hand grasped lightly the cushion by her side, the elbow of the other arm was placed on her knee, her head rested on the white fingers that were turned under her chin. Her purple train was wrapped about her feet.

She sat quite silent for some moments—this, too, was a way she had at the beginning of even ordinary interviews. It was impressive. Her half-closed eyes seemed as if they were scrutinizing the picture on the easel with an extreme judicial scrutiny.

Bartholomew looked, waited, wondered.

'You have come to make me an offer for the *Cenone*, Miss Richmond?' he said at last, smiling as he spoke under his gray moustache.

Miss Richmond raised her eyes slowly to his, not fully unclosing them.

'No,' she said, speaking in a low, quiet, deliberate way. There was no smile about her mouth. Her prominent upper lip curved forward, the under one was drawn in. 'No, I have not come to make an offer for the *Cenone*.'

There was another silence. It was broken by Miss Richmond, speaking always with the same forceful calm.

'I was desirous of seeing your picture,' she said; 'I have heard of it.'

to Genevieve to be listening with an interest that was as real as it was deferential. After a moment's pause he added, 'I have often wished, when I have found myself standing before a picture that I have really cared for, that I might know something of the history of its creation.'

'In many cases, perhaps in seven out of ten, the true history would disappoint you. Is not Browning's "Andrea del Sarto" a revelation?'

'It is,' said Kirkoswald, 'a sad one. But the pictures of Lucrezia's face reveal things to me that are sadder far. Take Browning's poem, Del Sarto's pictures, his wife's portrait, and you have as painful a soul's tragedy as you need want.'

The walls of the studio were still decorated with unfinished paintings, with careless sketches, with masterly studies. On the easel there was a full-length figure. It was, as George Kirkoswald saw for himself, a beautiful-browed Cænone. The Judas had been put away out of sight, untouched since the day it had excited discussion.

Noel Bartholomew was somewhat surprised by the insight and pertinence of his visitor's remarks.

'You paint yourself?' he asked, as they sat by the studio fire, in the midst of the glow of fine colour, of artistic ornament and suggestion that was everywhere in the place.

'No; on the contrary, I can't draw a straight line,' was the reply. 'But I have long been attracted towards art—half against my will in the first instance. I have been told that Byron had a great contempt for painting. I had no contempt, but a consummate indifference. A painted canvas seemed to me such an unreal thing. I know now that it was my own incapacity for recognising the real, that is to say, the spiritual, the true real, when I saw it; my own inability to perceive the right connection between human life and human art.'

'Then you are now-altogether on the side of the artists?' said Genevieve.

She was sitting opposite to George Kirkoswald, and her eyes met his. He saw that there was an intenser meaning in her question than it might seem to have.

He paused a moment before replying.

Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,
 A cloud that gathered shape : for it may be
 That, while I speak of it, a little while
 My heart may wander from its deeper woe.'

Altogether, the work had been made to seem what indeed it really was, an echo in colour of the poem that had inspired it.

'It is Tennyson's *Ænone*,' said Bartholomew, 'and Tennyson's scenery. The background, the pine-trees and the flowers, the lawns and meadow-ledges, the suggestion of Ilion in the distance of swimming vapour ; these things are all taken from the singer of to-day.'

'So I have heard ; and I have read the poem that I might be able to understand the picture. I read it this morning. . . . I could not help wondering how much you had comprehended it yourself !'

'Then now you can see.'

'No : pardon me. I cannot, not altogether.'

'So far, then, my intention has failed ?'

'Not if your intention was simply to paint a beautiful picture,' said Miss Richmond. 'I can see that it is beautiful. I can see that the face is the face of a lovely and sorrowful girl. But it is different from my ideal—the ideal raised in me by the poem itself. . . . It is not the face of a despairing, forsaken woman, longing passionately for death to end her despair ! praying to Death, crying aloud to him on the hills :

' " Pass by the happy souls that love to live :
 I pray thee, pass before my light of life ! "

Your *Ænone* is not therefore the *Ænone* that I find in Tennyson.'

'You think it needs more fervidness ?'

'I do not know. It needs something it has not.'

'My idea,' said Bartholomew, anxious apparently to keep the conversation as artistic as possible—'my idea has always been that either artist or poet is the greater in his art if he can succeed in heightening his effects by repression, by understatement rather than overstatement. . . . It would be easily possible to make the *Ænone* shriek aloud.'

I suppose you could never understand that a woman might be

'Then you have the misfortune to represent in your own person the two opposing parties?'

'Yes, I suppose so. I am very conscious of being torn two ways,' said Genevieve.

'On the one hand by a love of beauty, on the other by a fear that your desire for things beautiful is not, from the highest standpoint of all, a legitimate desire?'

'Precisely,' said Genevieve, looking up with some gratitude, some wonder in her eyes. 'It is precisely that. I want what I think the whole civilized world is wanting, A RECONCILER!'

'To reconcile what, speaking exactly?' asked her father.

'The Sermon on the Mount, and the interior of a modern artistically furnished house,' said the girl, speaking as if she spoke of a thing long considered.

'The command to take no thought for your life, with the strong, pure-seeming instinct for graceful, refined, and beautiful surroundings?' said George Kirkoswald. Then he added, 'Does it seem to you that no such reconciliation is possible?'

'On the contrary, I feel that *it must be possible*,' declared Genevieve with enthusiasm. 'But I cannot see it; I cannot find it. One day I honour most the men who can set their foot upon the neck of pride, the pride of the eye, the pride of life—who can live out their days surrounded by four bare walls, and never know that they are bare. Another day, and my whole soul is stirred by some good, some glory that I discern through some triumph of human art—art which has drawn its inspiration from Nature, and so, assuredly, can lead one from Nature up to Nature's God.'

'How the world is made for each of us!' said Kirkoswald musingly, hardly recognising his utterance as a quotation.

'You think that?' said Bartholomew; adding reverently, 'It has always seemed to me that Christ's own different way of dealing with each differently constituted and differently circumstanced individual that came to Him, was certainly sufficient warrant for supposing that He had no desire to reduce humanity to one dead level of thought and opinion.'

'One may be sure He never meant that,' said Kirkoswald; 'and it seems to me, also, a sure thing that He never meant to crush out

natural that a keen and vivid memory like his should bring back the time with many of its small incidents. It passed across him like a flash, that one summer when he had been half vexed to find that he could not set up his easel anywhere in the neighbourhood without sooner or later seeing Miss Richmond coming toward him, or hearing her step behind him. She had sat beside him, talked to him, looked at him, questioned him, and even read to him, until, from being glad to see her, he had grown to dread her coming with a strong and really well-defined dread. She had discovered this, and in the end there had been a scene. Was it of this that she was thinking as she sat there on the studio sofa among the embroideries?

'I am afraid I forget very few things, Miss Richmond,' he said at last. He was feeling some compassion, some desire to make his resistance as little hard and cruel as might be.

'If that be so, then, at least you can understand me,' Diana Richmond went on, looking into his face with eyes expressive only of keen pain. 'I forget nothing. I have never forgotten. Indeed, it does but seem as if all through these long weary years every feeling had been growing, intensifying itself. . . . And once I thought I had forgotten; you will have heard of that. And that was one reason why I came to-day to tell you the truth. I thought, too, that I might have led you to make wrong inferences the other day when I told you that story of my friend. . . . You remember?'

'Yes, I remember quite distinctly.'

'And you discovered that I spoke an allegory—that I meant myself when I spoke of another?'

'Yes, I may admit it since you ask. I thought that you alluded to your own experience, and I was sorry.'

'You were sorry?'

'Yes.'

'May I ask why you were sorry?'

'To learn that you had suffered so much. It is natural that one should feel regret at another's pain.'

Again Miss Richmond looked at him wonderingly, appealingly.

'You might have saved me from all the pain I have ever had,' she said at length, in low, wistful, beseeching tones. Then her



is a general tendency to what one may term "coming round" on the part of those who might seem to be the natural opponents of art. I heard one clergyman confessing to another the other day that he had never seen the real glory and loveliness of a sunset sky until he had seen a few scores of painted sunsets.'

'That bears out what Browning says. What is the passage, Genevieve?'

'You mean the one in "Fra Lippo Lippi"?'—

"For don't you mark? we're made so that we love
First when we see them painted, things we have passed
Perhaps a hundred times, nor cared to see;
And so they are better, painted—better to us,
Which is the same thing. Art was given for that;
God uses us to help each other so,
Lending our minds out."

'If I remember the context rightly, the poet includes more than landscape-painting,' said Bartholomew, who appeared to be very content to elicit another's views, keeping back his own, if, indeed, he had any that he could have presented on the spur of the moment, which is doubtful.

'Yes,' said Genevieve; 'he includes nature animate as well as inanimate. He puts the question:

"Do you feel thankful, aye or no,
For this fair town's face, yonder river's line,
The mountain round it, and the sky above,
Altho' ~~spore~~ the faces of man, woman, child,
These are the same to?"'

'Of course, all that can be said for the painting of nature applies in a much higher and stronger measure to the painting of humanity, or so it seems to me,' said Kirkoswald. 'The character, the history, that lies so pathetically written in the lines of a human countenance may surely be as beautiful a thing, and as full of meaning, as the truth that lies in the scars of a rugged cliff-side. It is by the study of art that one learns to see "what beauty there is in the dark eyes that are sunk with weeping, and in the paleness of those fixed faces which the world's adversity has compassed about, till they shine in their patience like dying watch-fires through twilight. I may be wrong, but it certainly appears to me that there is a greater sympathy abroad for all manner of suffering; and I attribute the

what the world would think of it, and of me; and it shows how I trust you, how I recognise you for what you are, that I can say it at all. But do not think it is easy; do not think it is costing me nothing. . . . Nothing? It is my life.'

Bartholomew did not look at her. He was still looking with grave gray eyes into the dying fire. The sun was low now; it had gone over the hilltops; and the studio was dim, the air chill and heavy.

'It is not easy to me—this part that I have to take,' he replied after a time. 'You will understand that; and, therefore, you will believe it.'

'How can I understand?' she asked, speaking with a subdued passionateness. 'How can I understand that you should be so inexorable—so impassive? . . . Answer me this—at least answer me this—do you hate me? Am I hateful in your sight?'

Noel Bartholomew looked at the face before him. It was beautiful at any time; it was much more than beautiful now in the new light of suffering and tenderness.

'Only one answer is possible to that question, Miss Richmond,' he said; 'and I hope I hardly need make it. I do not hate you; most certainly I do not. I am not conscious even of the faintest antipathy.'

Diana Richmond looked up. A smile came over her lips; it was the first smile that had been there that day, and it was full of sadness; but, despite the sadness, there was a touch of wonder and disdain.

'You are not conscious even of antipathy?' she repeated slowly. For a moment or two she sat silent, stirless, looking out from under her dusky hair, away into some vague distance. A keen observer might have seen by her heavy breathing, by her dilated eyes, by the quiver of lips that seemed firmly closed, that some strong conflict was going on within.

It was even so. She fought with a wild temptation; and she won. Her impulse, hearing this man's quiet, indifferent confession of indifference, had been to rise to her feet, to stand before him, to pour down upon him her wrath, her contempt, her utter scorn for a thing so callous, so apathetic, so obtusely imperturbable. This she could have done effectively without bating one iota of the

Genevieve always thought this the best time of all ; there was so much confidence, so little strain ; there was no more dread of silence than of mistaken speech.

One dull gray afternoon they sat together as usual : there was a cheery fire, and Genevieve's canary seemed to be singing to the leaping flame. Mr. Kirkoswald had called during the day, merely, he said, to beg that they would not think of going up to Usselby until the roads were better. He had stayed in the studio awhile, then he had lingered again in the dainty sitting-room ; and Genevieve had found that his lingering there was very sweet—perilously sweet. When he went out, a little cry, half of gladness, half of a new and unknown pain, went after him, a cry that came echoing back a moment later with the force of an openly-uttered reproach.

Genevieve was thinking of it as she sat silently there by her father's side in the twilight. When she spoke he was aware of the slight effort in her voice.

'What age should you say Mr. Kirkoswald is, father?' she asked somewhat abruptly.

'I was thinking of his age this morning,' answered Mr. Bartholomew. 'He will be thirty-five, or thereabouts.'

'Not more than that?'

'No, he can't be more than that. . . . What age should you have supposed him to be?'

'Fifty! . . . What is it that makes him look so old?'

'He does look old for his years, I admit ; and there is a history in his face. But I should say it was the history of some more or less intellectual strife, rather than of any ordinary life-experience. Whatever it is, it has taken the years. Still it is a grand face and a grand head!'

'You are thinking of painting it?' said Genevieve, rather in the tone of a protest. A minute later she was conscious of a strong desire to see it painted.

'No ; on the contrary, I decided this morning that his face was one that I should never attempt,' replied Mr. Bartholomew. 'I could but fail. It is too full of the perplexity of life, and his eyes have too much of the luminousness of thought in them. Altogether there is a good deal in him that could never be made

'I hope that fortune and the weather will favour us when you come back again,' said Bartholomew. 'I am ashamed to think that we have never yet found our way to Usselby.'

'I always hold professional people excused from conventional observances,' replied George. 'Besides, I have a fear that I have never given you any very strong impression that I should be glad to see you. Truth to tell, the place looks so desolate, nay, worse than that, so dilapidated, that I am half ashamed of it. Nevertheless, come. It will seem less desolate when you have been there.'

He had spoken to Bartholomew, but his eyes had sought Genevieve's while he uttered the last sentence; and she knew that he spoke to her alone. Her colour came, and deepened; a little pleasantry died away from her lips unsaid. Did he know what these seldom-recurring admissions and revealings were to her? Did he dream what solemn weight they had? how full they were of grave assurance? Already it seemed that she could need no further assurance. This love was definite enough for this life.

So it was that there could be satisfaction in his absence, contentment in his silence.

Never in her life had there been a time of such full rest, such full sweetness, such full faith in a large and liberal future.

She asked no question of herself, none of him; there were none to be asked. The unspoken understanding that was in a glance, in a tone, authenticated every thought of the days to be. It was a time of stillness—the stillness that precedes rapture; and it held opportunity for an almost spiritual reverence of the latent felicity that the next moment might unfold. There was no desire to hurry its unfolding; rather was there desire for the continuance of the present beautiful strangeness, the present immaterial ties, the present half-acknowledged sympathies. No certain knowledge could overpass this sweet uncertainty.

The day when the long-promised visit to Usselby came to be made was a bright, windy January day. The leafless trees on the edge of the moor rocked and whitened in the sunshine; the wind blew pale hollows in the fleeces of the black-faced moorland sheep; the sea of barren heather was tossing and heaving in dark wild

Something seemed to be weighing upon her, some great loneliness or weariness, some strong desire. She was speaking of wasted lives, of unseen sorrows, unsuspected despairs, of lifelong misunderstandings. Mr. Bartholomew was listening, replying when reply was called for, but he felt at a loss to know whether Miss Richmond's remarks were quite of the general nature they appeared on the surface of them to be. It was odd how, now and then, the man's keen perceptive powers failed him.

Genevieve knew less of Miss Richmond than her father did, but she saw more than he did to-day. To her there was nothing impersonal about Diana Richmond's words, except the grammatical mood of them.

Once the girl thought that, if they had been alone, she would have knelt down beside Miss Richmond, and clasped her hand, and prayed her to speak of the thing, whatever it was, that was lying underneath the stilled, oppressive graciousness of her ways. Her words were said slowly, quietly, emphatically, but they had the effect of a wild cry of confession upon the girl, whose own emotions were just then being wrought upon more than she herself knew.

'The strange thing is,' Miss Richmond was saying, 'that people don't get over things; they *don't* forget, as the preachers of consolation tell you they do. "Time heals all sorrows," they tell you; but it is a platitude, and not a true one. Sometimes people deceive themselves; they think they have forgotten, and then something brings all back again, and it is worse than before.'

'I suppose it is so, very often,' said Mr. Bartholomew sadly. He was thinking of his own sorrow just then—he could not help it—wondering if he could ever deceive himself into thinking that he had forgotten.

Miss Richmond was continuing:

'I had a friend,' she said; 'it was years ago; we were children together. When she was engaged to be married I felt it like a blow, as if she had died; and I went into deep mourning. But the engagement was soon broken off. The man was a flirt, and as cruel and heartless as a man could be. Nothing would move him. She was years before she got over it. All the best of her life went in anguish. But she did seem to get over it at last. Then—only

comfort to it. It might be gloomy on a gloomy day, just when you desire of a room that it should have some brightness ; but all days are not days of darkness. It was not dark to-day. The sun was slanting athwart the mullions of the low window at the other end of the room. Far away beyond, over the green of the cliff-top, there was a streak of dull blue sea against the brighter blue of the sky.

Kirkoswald had been writing, and the contracted lines about his great square forehead did not smooth themselves out all at once. There were books on either hand, newspapers on the floor, sheets of manuscript still wet on the table.

'I am beginning to have a suspicion that we have interrupted you,' said Genevieve, taking the chair he had placed for her by the fire.

'You have ; but just at the very point when interruption was needed. I was writing an article for the *Quixotic Review*, and it is already too long. I shall have to spend as much time in cutting it down as I have spent in writing it.'

'You might make a pamphlet of it.'

'So I might. But do you think anybody reads pamphlets in this epoch of magazines ? Perhaps it might get itself read if I called it a monogram. But thanks for the suggestion. I shall think of it. If you will let me, I will talk the thing over with you some day, before I send it off. I know you would be interested. It is connected with something we were speaking of the other day—the life of those to whom life means naught but labour. I would have asked you to listen a little now, but Jael is coming with some tea, and I want you to see the house. I want Mr. Bartholomew's advice about it. What am I to do with such a place ?'

'Are you speaking disrespectfully of it ?' asked Genevieve, opening her violet-gray eyes a little wider.

'Do you wonder that I should ? Do you like it ?' asked Kirkoswald with an almost boyish eagerness.

'I like it so much that I feel as if I had always liked it, always known it,' said Genevieve, speaking with guileless unreserve. 'Indeed, it is strange,' she went on ; 'ever since I saw the twisted chimneys, and the gables, and the dormer windows, I have had quite a strong impression of having seen the place before.'

that he could not explain, if explanation were needed,' he said to himself in the dead of the night, when he lay awake, thinking of his daughter's future as he had never thought of it before, and realizing his own carelessness about it.

The carelessness was incomprehensible now that its probable consequences were becoming visible in the distance. If life were spared to him, with power to work, he might atone in a measure; but the 'if' was an important one, and he perceived it now. He could only hope that knowledge had not come too late.

Soulsgrif Bight was all alive that morning—almost as much alive as it had been on the day of the storm. The stranded ship had broken up during the last tide or two. Groups of figures were hurrying about; men with gay-coloured sou'-westers and dark-blue guernseys; women with red shawls; children with bright pinafores; some were bringing firewood from the wrecks that lay on the dark beach; others brought ropes and iron. A man was coming up with a clock that he had found amongst the wreckage; both its hands were gone, and the dial-plate was cracked across. Some children were making merry over a bird-cage which had been found among the tangled weeds, with a little dead bird at the bottom of it.

People were straying all about the sands. Some were sauntering away toward the reef, others were coming back. On the edge of the quay there was a gentleman standing—a tall, strong man, with dark hair; a loose gray coat, and an impressive manner of wearing it. He was talking to the auctioneer, who had come down from Thurkeld Abbas to sell one of the wrecks. Suddenly he turned his head, not knowing why he turned it, and the colour that rose slowly to his clear, dark-toned face was plain there for anyone to see. He came forward rather hurriedly, but as if he tried to repress something as he came. The light in his eyes as he shook hands with Genevieve was at least as glad as the light in her own.

'Do you know that I have been hoping—I may say expecting—that you would come?' he said. 'Indeed, more or less, I believe that I always expect you to be in Soulsgrif Bight when I come down.'

'Do you expect to see me standing on that rock in a storm?'

double chins looked threateningly down from frames of shabby gold. There was a hunting-man in pink, a naval officer in blue, a legal ancestor in wig and gown. It would have been a curious study to try to make out the spiritual lineage of the present owner of Usselby Hall by help of these varying portraits of his ancestors.

Remembering some such rooms, would it not be possible to find in one's heart a feeling of satisfaction that one's ancestors had never been painted at all; that one stood alone and distinct, so to speak, unhaunted and undaunted by a painted cloud of witnesses to one's heritage of meanness, weakness, vanity, hardness of heart, or general moral obliquity.

There were not many of the portraits that George Kirkoswald could turn to with any feeling of gratification, or even of content. Some day he would remove the greater part of them, he said to himself this afternoon, looking at them through another's eyes. And even as he said so his imagination painted for him another picture to fill the frame where a faded lady in orange satin stood leaning against a brown tree. The orange-coloured lady's hair, with someone else's to help it, was built up a quarter of a yard above her head; she had puffy cheeks and tiny bead-like eyes of a dull brown. Kirkoswald could hardly help turning to the living picture that stood beside his undignified and unbeautiful ancestress. For one moment he had a wild impulse to ask Bartholomew then and there if he would paint this daughter of his as she stood at that moment, with her fine, sweet face turned upward toward the picture, her curved lips parted with half a smile, her rich masses of golden hair blown into picturesque confusion by the winds of Langbarugh Moor, and touched now by the last slanting ray of sunshine.

Could any artist that ever painted, paint such loveliness as this? And if he achieved that, could he achieve something more? Could he put on canvas the inner light that was in the eyes, the changeful meanings that passed so swiftly across the mouth, the revelation that was in the ascetic lines of the lower part of the face, the vigorous intellectual activity which stamped the upper part? 'If it could be done, it ought to be done now,' he said to himself, feeling instinctively that it was the kind of face that ten years of life would harrow with the wear and tear of twenty.

hard; she earned much of her living that way, knitting strong blue guernseys for the fishermen of the Bight.

'Eh, bless you, then, is 't you?' she had said in her own rude, glad way as she opened the door. 'Come yer ways in, an' sit ya doon, both o' ya. Ah said when miss came she'd be comin' wi' you; Ah said so to Davy. An' Ah said if Ah'd been better off for menseful* graithing, Ah'd ha' maäde bold to ha' asked you both tiv a cup o' tea.'

Then the woman stopped, too dignified to lay bare the worst, and too cheerful for any ordinary listener to suspect it.

George went out presently, and Davy went upstairs, coming down again with a tiny model of a ship, which he would have lacked courage to offer but for his mother's presence there. It was not very daintily finished, but it was beautiful by reason of its exquisite proportions.

'He's done it all hisself, miss, an' he thowt 'at ya'd like to hev it, as it 'ud sort o' remind ya o' that day, an' o' your life an' his bein' saved together like. An' eh, but yon gentleman is a brave man! an' a strong un, too. They saäy he pulled i' the boat as if he'd niver done nowt but handle an oar since he was born. . . . Ah reckon ya'd know him afore yer came te this neighbourhood, miss?'

'No; I did not know him before,' said Genevieve. 'I did not know him until that day.'

'Ya don't saäy so? Then, mebbe, 't isn't as Ah thowt,' said Ailsie, looking into Genevieve's face, as if she feared that she had made a mistake. 'Ya mun excuse me, miss, if Ah said owt 'at Ah sudn't ha' said. But there weren't no harm anyways in me praisin' him. Ah didn't know him mysel' till they said his name were Kirkoswald; but Ah'd seen him when he was a little lad; Ah'd seen him up at Usselby. . . . Ya'll ha' been there, miss?'

'No,' said Genevieve, again feeling that the admission would be considered an unwilling one—'no, we have not been to Usselby yet. . . . Do you know it well?'

'Noa; Ah don't know it nut to saäy well; but 't isn't much of a plaäce; nut like Yarrell Croft, nor nothing o' that sort. Years ago 'twas a kin o' rackleoon oäd spot; an' Ah niver heerd 'at owt

* Menseful—decent, respectable.

'And, of course, you know what precisely the thing is that you wish to have done?'

'Yes, I believe so. I wish to have this house made into a home, a home that shall be a desirable place to live in because of its beauty. And, moreover, I want it doing as soon as may be, since it is evident that I cannot ask Warburton to bring his wife here till it is done.'

'If you do all that I should do in your place, it will require time,' said Bartholomew. 'You will want an artist, perhaps two, down from London, who can paint in fresco. I should recommend the Gambier Parry process.'

'Yes; you are thinking of the staircase? And there is the drawing-room. The panelling below the picture-space has been painted white. It might be scraped; I should say it is oak.'

'Probably. But you would not care for the effect of dark oak in that room, especially as there would be nothing to balance it. Why not have the panels decorated—some of the lighter and brighter historical scenes, for instance? It would have to be done in flat-painting, and in the palest possible tints. The wall-space above might be gilt and diapered, and above that again you might have a frieze painted to accord with the panels.'

'That promises well!' said Kirkoswald, after musing over it a little while. 'But if the tints are all to be so pale, how would you get a look of warmth into the room?'

'By means of the hangings, something Indian; nothing can equal the Indian things for good subdued harmonies of rich colour. And you would have your carpet and rugs in keeping.'

'And the dining-room?' asked George.

'The dining-room I should leave as it is,' replied Mr. Bartholomew; 'and this room also—that is, so far as the walls are concerned. Nothing could be finer in its way than this old wainscoting. You might have fireplaces of carved oak, and you will want some tiles, both for the fireplaces and the floor of the hall. You will have to be careful about choosing your tiles—good ones are to be had.'

Genevieve had taken no part in the conversation so far, she was not even looking at the two who were carrying it on; but one of

'Eh me!' said his poor mother; 'he'll be like his father. He'll niver ha nowt but what he blashes i' t' sea for; an' then he'll end wi' lyin' at the bottom o' 't. It is a dree doom.'

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SOUNDING OF HUMAN CHORDS.

Let be, beloved—

I will taste somewhat this same poverty—
Try these temptations, grudges, gnawing shames,
For which 'tis blamed. How probe an unfelt evil?
Wouldst be the poor man's friend? Must freeze with him—
Test sleepless hunger—let thy crippled back
Ache o'er the endless furrow.'

KINGSLEY: *The Saint's Tragedy*.

NOEL BARTHOLOMEW spent a couple of hours over his sketch of the wreck of the *Waldemar*. His daughter sat near him awhile; but it was too cold for her to remain sitting there in the December breeze. Perhaps, too, she was in a less quiescent mood than usual. She went back again to the little hamlet after a time; asking George Kirkoswald to remain there by her father, who always liked to have a companion near him when he was sketching out of doors. She wanted to go in and out among the fisher-folk quite alone.

'They will talk to one person as they cannot talk to two or three,' she said, speaking to Mr. Kirkoswald, who was accompanying her to the edge of the reef. 'If I had a trouble I could never tell it to more than one person.'

'Do you think you could tell it to me?' asked George Kirkoswald, speaking with a sudden effort.

Genevieve hesitated a moment, her head drooped a little, her colour came and went; but she spoke honestly, and without affectation.

'Yes; I think I could,' she said in a low, penetrating voice. She knew that she made a great concession. George Kirkoswald knew that it was not made lightly.

Was it fortunate that they were parting just as the word was

behind. I dare say you know the second volume of "Modern Painters," and Ruskin's idea that all pure beauty is neither more nor less than a shadow of something to be found in God Himself. If that be so, and I think it is, it will account for much that we take no note of now ; it will make plain much that we misconceive. Who can express in words the effect upon his own soul of a sunset, of a storm at sea, of truly grand music, of a really good picture, of a really fine statue? And these latter are but form, and colour, and sound.'

'Only form, and colour, and sound,' repeated Kirkoswald. 'And yet so long as a man's soul can be reached through his senses it is important to consider what shall be put before him for his senses to entertain. There are men who can be stirred, uplifted, through their senses alone. It seems as if the straight soul-avenues of thought, of spiritual perception, were closed for them. Over men of this stamp music often has a power that is quite inexplicable. Others find form and colour more stimulating; and again there are men who can be moved by all three. Perhaps I am among the latter ; so you will understand why I am anxious to arrive at some sufficient reason for making my house beautiful, or leaving it unbeautiful.'

'Is there no middle course?' asked Genevieve, smiling. 'Must you either spend some thousands of pounds, or go on with frayed curtains and faded carpets?'

'Softly, Genevieve dear!' said Mr. Bartholomew. 'Softly ; I think you should leave the question of cost till Mr. Kirkoswald raises it himself.'

'Then I must leave one of the most important issues of the whole matter,' said the girl, speaking firmly. 'If these things that you suggest could be had without money, I would say, have them by all means ; and as soon as possible, let us all have them. There is no inherent harm in them ; it is conceivable, as you say, that there may be good ; they are most certainly full of delight, quite pure delight. It is the idea of the money they represent that takes the delight out of them for me. If I were walking up your frescoed staircase I should hear the cry of children who cry for hunger ; I should see the white wan faces of women worn with working for bread.'

as James Hinton believed, that we are all of us helping, all of us who suffer, to work out the redemption of the race. It is beautiful, it is sad, it is infinitely great.'

'Yes: it is great; but, as you say, the idea has an element of sadness in it. Now and then one meets aged, tired, sorrowful eyes fixed on one's face full of things altogether unutterable. They are the eyes of people who have lived through want, and wrong, and contempt, and pain, and lifelong neglect; but it is as if they said, "And yet we have not lived vainly." Vainly?—no; it is not such lives as theirs that are lived in vain.'

'The great problem of how best to help the suffering poor,' said Bartholomew, 'is always more or less a painful one, unless you happen to be able to offer substantial help yourself in the cases that actually come under your own notice.'

'That is true,' said Kirkoswald. 'But I fear that a great deal more than mere giving must go to the solving of the problem.'

'It seems to me that there is almost infinite good to be done without any giving at all,' interposed Genevieve warmly. 'That is the one thing that struck me most of all to-day, the gratitude of the people for a word, a mere look of sympathy. They don't say they are grateful; but you feel it in their very accent, in their reluctance to let you turn away, in their wistful hoping that you will come again. Oh, if I could, I would go down there and live amongst them, live as they live, work as they work, endure what they endure; then I would tell the world what I had learnt in Soulsgrif Bight.'

'And you expect the world would listen?' asked her father.

'There are people in it who would listen, some who have no chance of hearing of such things, some who would not go out of their way to hear them. . . . Oh, the world is not bad!' said the girl, speaking out of her own bright human heart which no experience had as yet torn or bruised. 'The world is not bad, it is not unkind; it is only stupidly inanimate. And it is not only where the poor are concerned. We show it in everything. I believe people hold aloof from each other as much from fear and dread of repulsion as from anything else. Sometimes—in London—I have felt half wretched, half angry, to see a room full of people, one staring coldly, another contemptuously, another with sublime

face a sign that is significant to them of human need for the compassion that is divine. . . . These are they who will ask in such amaze—"Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered?"

* * * *

The conversation did not end there. It went on gravely awhile, moving in and out, being, as it were, the silver thread that the Master-workman uses to draw His work together.

Genevieve and her father went home in the twilight, and George Kirkoswald went with them to the farther edge of the moor. As he went back alone a young moon, like a tiny sickle of pure gold, hung over the dark purple distance; the sky was one vast, clear gradation of tint and tone, from faint amber to indigo blue. Late as it was, a robin was chirping on a leafless sloe-thorn.

And George Kirkoswald was questioning himself as he went. Seeing Genevieve Bartholomew at his own home that day, watching her as she moved about his rooms, listening to her foot on the stair, to her voice as she spoke, he had recognised the things that alone could make his home homelike. Two souls with one high aim, two minds with one strong will, two hearts beating in tune to one impulse—the rest might be there, or not there. Would she decide? Had he ground enough for hoping that one day she would come and say, 'This let us do, for the sake of seemliness; and that let us not do, for the sake of Christ'?

Then, thinking again, he knew that she had said these things. If she never came to Usselby, nor spoke of it again, she had drawn for him a line over which he knew that he could not step unarrested.

CHAPTER XXV.

OUT OF THE PAST.

'But do thy worst to steal thyself away,
For term of life thou art assured mine;
And life no longer than thy love will stay,
For it depends upon that love of thine.'

SHAKESPEARE: *Sonnet XCII.*

It was acknowledged throughout the district that the downward tendency of things at Hunsgarth Hags was in no way attributable to ignorance or mismanagement on the part of Miss Craven.

fancied. To-day he covered a good deal of ground quite unaware of loneliness.

It was not altogether thought of Genevieve Bartholomew that occupied his mind. It seemed to him that he had lived a tolerably long life before that eventful day in Soulsgrif Bight. He had lived much, he had endured much ; he had made mistakes, and suffered for them. His early dreams, like the early dreams of all of us, had wrought for him some very painful waking moments. Still there had been good in his life as well as evil, gain as well as loss. The thing that impressed him most when he looked back was the enormous aggregate of the experience which had been crowded into his five-and-thirty years. Until quite recently it had seemed to him that if he should live another five-and-thirty years they would inevitably be years of comparative emptiness. There could be nothing to make them otherwise ; nothing that could add any great zest to life, and make the natural ending of it seem particularly undesirable. He had ideas, and not vague ones, of the future and its work, but they had been very apt to round themselves off with an expressive sigh.

He was thinking of the future now as he went striding over the dark-brown moor, but no sigh followed upon his thoughts.

He had put away the past—he put it away with an audibly-spoken word :

‘Oh, the difference!’ he said ; ‘the unspeakable difference between one human soul and another!’

He was thinking of two souls as he spoke, and neither of them his own. One had been laid before him in that past from which he turned so willingly ; the other was unfolding itself to him now. Another page had just been turned, fair, pure, glowing with human warmth, alight with intellectual fires, inspired by something beyond, finer and rarer even than these. What wonder that as he walked on he should lose the sense of time and distance ! What wonder that, for that hour at least, the future that had seemed so irksome and infelicitous should open before him like a vision of a new life, a life that he might live, entering upon its fair chances and far-reaching possibilities, with the hope and gladness of a man entering into possession of a great and unexpected heritage !

written there. Yet Dorothy could see that he was, so to speak, watching himself, that he had mental insight enough to know that that insight was failing. The effort he made was heartrending, though he made it so quietly. There was money borrowed here, money owing there.

'You're listening, Dorothy?' he said now and again. 'You're trying to understand?'

And Dorothy assured him to his satisfaction that all was plain to her comprehension, all that so far had been placed before her. But there was a good deal behind yet—confusion, intricacies, arrears of rent, arrears of interest. The old man's utterance grew less clear, less firm; his voice trembled, then it gave way altogether.

'I can't see, Dorothy—Dorothy, I can't remember; I can't understand!'

That was the end of effort—a passionate burst of wild, unrestrained weeping that would not be comforted; of sobs and tears that seemed like a great upheaval of the strong man's strength. . . . That was the end. He was never himself again after that, and it was Dorothy's turn to be strong—strong and faithful. From that morning she had done her best, the best that might be done by a woman in a world of hard and unscrupulous men.

She had had offers enough of help, some of them from men who had professed themselves her father's friends, but no keener strokes had fallen upon her life than those that had taught her what such offers meant. She was not an over-sensitive woman, but many a time her brain had almost reeled under the sense of her own helplessness against wrong and oppression.

Still, Dorothy Craven had borne up and borne on bravely, fighting where fighting was to be done, and enduring where fighting was of no avail. None but God took count of it. None but God. In all the wide world there was neither man nor woman to whom Dorothy could turn when her soul fainted under her burdens. Some of the people about saw that she had burdens; they did not fail to gossip of that, and they all of them knew that deep under her business trials she had another trial lying still, if indeed it did lie still.

'No, it is not, not as a rule. I would not tell him so for the world: and, happily, there is no one else here to tell him. And I hardly know myself where it fails. It is not in design, and it is not in execution; so far as that goes he will do good work or none. The defect seems to arise out of failure of that staying power which he once had so abundantly. He changes his mind, he alters this and that, and so confuses the original conception. This has happened to everything he has done here, except the *Cenone*; that is the exception to the rule. It is as perfect, perhaps more perfect, than aught he ever did. But his work is taking ten times as much out of him as it used to do, because of this very uncertainty.'

'Ah! that is quite intelligible,' said the sympathetic old man. 'I have had my fears lately, but they were of another kind. Now I understand. That was partly why I came with Severne this afternoon, that I might see you alone a little, while your father and he were busy. . . . Is the Sir Galahad promising well?'

'Sir Galahad is here to answer for himself,' said that benignant young man, bursting into the room, displaying his beautiful white teeth and his crimson blush. 'I say, I've been turned out of the studio! There's a lady there. . . . Miss Richmond!'

'Miss Richmond!' exclaimed Genevieve, in amazement. 'She is in the studio? Then I ought to go down!'

'I—I don't think I would, if I were you!' said Sir Galahad. 'I beg pardon, but—well, you know Miss Richmond seems as if she didn't want anybody. That was why I came away. She looked awfully glad when I said I would go.'

That Miss Richmond should be described as looking 'awfully glad' was, to say the least of it, a little incongruous under the circumstances.

There was something in her face and in her manner that Noel Bartholomew would not have attempted to describe at all. It perplexed him, and he was perplexed, too, by her coming in the manner she had come.

'I will let my daughter know that you are here,' he said, moving as if to follow Mr. Severne.

But Miss Richmond detained him, as much by her look as by

Genevieve went upward in the sunshine as lightly as a bird. There were a few daisies by the roadside ; a young oak-tree had some red crisp leaves on it, last year's leaves. A man was coming round by the bramble-brake, whistling 'Barbara Allan,' looking hot and angry, swinging his arms about.

'Eh, it's you then, Miss Bartholomew, is it?' shouted Mr. Crudas, his gray whiskers seeming to stand out on either side of his keen red face a little more fiercely than usual. 'You'll be going up to see Miss Dorothy, Ah reckon? Well, I hope she'll be civil to you. It's more than she's been to me. Ay, it's more than she's been to me for many a year back. But I hev'n't given up hopin' yet, an' what's more, Ah don't mean to give up. You can tell her that if she gives you a chance o' speakin'.'

Genevieve could only guess what it was that Mr. Crudas was determined to hope for so persistently. Perhaps she looked rather perplexed.

'Ah'll nut keep ya stannin', miss,' said Ishmael, with polite thoughtfulness. 'Ah'll turn aboot, an' walk up t' hill a bit; Ah can saäy what Ah want to saäy better, so. . . . Ah've thought many a time 'at mebbe you could put things afore Dorothy in a different waäy fra what Ah can put 'em. Ya'll know all about it, Ah reckon?'

'I don't know anything about it,' said Genevieve. 'I cannot even guess what should make Miss Craven ungracious to you. I fancied—well, I fancied you were old friends!'

'Friends! It doesn't seem to me so very many years sen we were lovers—just on t' point o' bein' married! 'Tis a good bit, too. Dorothy was only turned o' nineteen, an' Ah was but just thirty. All t' country-side knew on it, for there was mony a better-like an' better-to-do chap nor me would ha' married Dorothy Craven if she'd given 'em a chance. Not but what we were well anuff off, my father an' me; an' them 'at said we'd gettin' t' bit we had wi' smugglin' tell'd a lee—beggin' yer pardon, miss. Ah might ha' said a lie, as Ah's talkin' tiv a laädy!'

'Smuggling! But was there smuggling in this neighbourhood so recently as that?'

'Ay, an' not a little neither, an' Ah'll nut say but what Ah knew more about it nor Ah sud ha' done. An' Ah'll nut lay t' blame o'

'Have you, indeed? Do people talk of pictures in the neighbourhood of Murk-Marishes?'

'They talk of everything in the neighbourhood of Murk-Marishes. They talk of you, and they talk of me.'

'Ah! that is more conceivable,' replied Bartholomew, instinctively keeping to a light and lively tone. 'That is much more conceivable: but I should like to know what they say of the picture—I should like to know *all* they say. That is the drawback of being surrounded by non-critical people, one hears only the praise.'

'Do you like to hear blame?'

'No. I don't. There are people in the world who tell one their adverse opinion with a kind intention, no doubt. They think it must be a good thing for an artist to be made aware of his faults, of the mistakes he has fallen into. It never seems to occur to them that he has probably been very sadly and bitterly aware of his shortcomings all through. A man seldom sees mistakes of any kind till he has made them, and as a rule that is too late. The best plan, undoubtedly, is to put your failures in the fire if they can be put there. . . . But you have not yet told me what you have heard said of the *Ænone*?'

He drew the easel forward into a fuller light as he spoke. The picture on it was large; the figure of *Ænone* standing there in her white Greek drapery, 'leaning on a fragment twined with vine,' singing her sad music to the stillness of the mountain shades of *Ida*, was a striking and infinitely suggestive figure. The fascination of the picture was, of course, centred in the face of the 'beautiful-browed' maiden. It was purity itself—faultless purity; and it had in it an unspeakable loveliness, a most sweet and touching sorrow. The pale countenance was uplifted; the eyes raised supplicatingly; the wan yellow hair floated down over the neck and robe; the lips were parted as if uttering the words that were to be given as keynote to the picture:

'O mother *Ida*, many-fountain'd *Ida*,
Dear mother *Ida*, hearken ere I die.

* * * * *

Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls

a look at those kegs, my friend !” he said, in a sort of a mincin’, south-country tongue. An’ Ah knew ’twas all up wi’ ma then. He was one o’ t’ coöstguard, an’ there was mair on ’em behind, an’ folks com’ clusterin’ round like bees round a burtree. . . . Well, the upshot was ’at Ah didn’t see Swarthcliff Top neä mair—well, t’ next winter. My poor old father had been buried just a week when I got heame. An’ fra that daäy to this Dorothy Craven’s niver spoken me a civil word to swear by.’

Genevieve was silent a minute or two. It was certainly something of a shock to her to find herself talking on friendly terms to a man who had been a whole long year in prison for smuggling. It was not difficult to understand Miss Craven’s attitude now.

The girl could not help thinking over it all from Miss Craven’s side—the side of a proud, high-spirited woman, sensitive to her neighbour’s opinion. And she did not doubt but that there had been wounded love as well as wounded pride. Though the story was short, it evidently covered long years of suffering.

Ishmael Crudas expressed repentance for his wrong-doing, though, sooth to say, it had seemed to him that his error had consisted in his being found out. His regret and sorrow for the consequences to Miss Craven was altogether another thing ; but if she had suffered, so had he. Since she had refused to enter Swarthcliff Top as its mistress he had sworn that no other woman should enter there, and he had kept his word. He had men-servants and maid-servants on his farm, but no woman crossed the threshold of his big, dismal house, not even Martha Haggets, who did his washing. Ishmael Crudas had laid it down as a condition that her husband should take it home. It was a lonely life for a man, and uncongenial ; but if Dorothy Craven could make her days hard and her life solitary, so could he. She could never reproach him in that ; she should never say that the punishment had fallen upon herself alone. Ishmael Crudas had said that he had not done hoping yet, and this was evidently true. Just now it seemed to him that circumstance was working very certainly towards the fulfilment of his desires.

‘ There isn’t a chance for her, miss ; there isn’t a chance. She’s done despert well for a woman, but she’s had ivery thing ageän her fra t’ start. There’s misery anuff afore her if she will hold on i’

driven to shriek aloud?' said Miss Richmond in tones that were as far as possible from shrieking.

'One has to understand such things,' said Bartholomew, at a loss to know what to say. The feeling was gathering about him that he was standing on the very verge of some precipice, and that he had stood there before. He could only turn his face, refusing to look downward.

Miss Richmond looked at him for a moment as he made this reply. It was a look of appeal, of suffering, of such tenderness as he had never thought to see on the face before him. It was only pain to him to see it there.

When she spoke again she spoke as if the silence had been full of continued speech.

'Have you forgotten so completely?' she asked, in a tone that almost startled him by its intensity.

He might, without cruelty, have asked to what particular incident of his life she was referring, so little impression of any lasting kind had been made upon him by that part of his existence which had been lived within Miss Richmond's ken. That was about all that could be said of it—that it had been lived within reach of her influence. Her question as to whether he had forgotten awoke no sense of shame, of regret. If any touch of embarrassment was upon him, it was not for his own sake.

He was not a vain man now; he had not been vain twenty years before. He had always been conscious of his own exterior disadvantages. He even believed himself to have been saddened by his want of the power of making a favourable impression at first sight. When he had been able no longer to hide from himself that Miss Richmond was apparently trying to make a favourable impression upon him, he had with excellent good sense set it down to her desire to beguile the heavy days that were passing on at Yarrell Croft. Besides, tall and splendidly-formed as she was, he had but looked upon her as a child, an untrained, inexperienced, and rather daringly unwise girl of seventeen; while he was a man of well-nigh thirty years. In point of fact the whole affair had amused him first, and then annoyed him, without once awakening in him any real interest.

Now that he was thus asked if he had forgotten, it was but

There's been nobody to care. I've niver said as much to any human soul as I've said to you.'

'You will not repent having said it!'

'Yes, I shall. I shall be wild wi' myself for a bit. Then I shall be glad, mebbe.'

'And after that?'

'After that it'll all be as it was again.'

'Then I have made no impression whatever?'

Dorothy hesitated a moment, then she smiled a little—a strangely sweet smile for so sad a woman.

'It won't do Ishmael Crudas no harm my knowin' 'at you take his part. Nobody never took it afore to me.'

'I cannot help it. I cannot but feel sorry for him because of his long repentance, of his keen desire to make up for the ill that was done. Has his patience never touched you at all, not even a little?'

'He's been more than patient,' Miss Craven admitted. 'He's done me many a good turn 'at I've only found out after from others; an' he's born more fra me than I ever thought any man would ha' borne from a woman. An' I've seen all that, an' more, plain enough. But if ever I've had a thought o' relentin' I've had ten o' bitterness an' desire for revenge to make up for it. . . . But I heven't felt so vengeful lately. I've been ower much broken down wi' other things. An' that's what folks 'ud say if I was to give in now. I should be a laughing-stock for the country-side. It 'ud be said 'at I'd had to go to Swarthcliff Top to save myself fra havin' to go to the workhouse.'

Genevieve sighed. It was very perplexing to her inexperience to find what a strong reserve of motive Miss Craven had accumulated; still she had an instinctive feeling that some of the arguments were being brought forth in the hope that they might be met—that they might be overthrown in the meeting. Genevieve did her best. She expressed amazement at the idea that anyone should care for the gossip of 'the country-side'; and she almost surprised herself by her own boldness in daring to suggest that Miss Craven had strengthened herself in her pride until pride ruled as her master—but she did dare. 'Is not that the root of all your bitterness?' she said, speaking gently and pleadingly. 'Is not that the secret of your inability to yield? . . . You must forgive me if I

head dropped, her face slipped downward till it was hidden by her white hand. 'You might have saved me!—you might have saved me!' she murmured in a wild, piercing way.

Noel Bartholomew sat with clasped hands, looking into the fire. The gray hollow of his cheeks looked grayer; the deep intensity of his eyes seemed deeper for this strange perplexity. There was safety only in silence.

Miss Richmond raised her head presently; there was a new look on her face—a look as of one torn in conflict and overpowered.

'What was it I said of George Kirkoswald just now?' she asked, evidently trying to remember.

'You said nothing,' replied Bartholomew; 'that is, you did not mention his name.'

'No? I should be glad to know that his name need never pass my lips again. If I ever felt hate in my life, if I know what hate is, then I hate that man. It has not always been so; I know that, and sometimes . . . but no, no, I do hate him, and I wanted to tell you so. I wanted to tell you, knowing that it was safe with you.' Then Diana Richmond changed her tone for a moment, and added, 'There may yet be reason why I should be glad to know that that fact had only been confided to one person, and that one a gentleman.'

'I think it will be safe with me,' said Bartholomew, with as little expression of any kind as he could use. He was not sorry to know this thing. He could conceive of nothing just then that could make him wish to disclose it.

'And that is all you have to say?' asked Miss Richmond with surprise. 'That is all your reply? It is no relief to you to know that I do not care for another?'

The only reply that Bartholomew could have made truthfully would have seemed pitiless, almost inhuman under the circumstances. Again silence only was possible to him; but it was not a silence that could be mistaken.

There was a new softness in Miss Richmond's tone when she spoke again.

'I am not a child now,' she said. 'I need not tell you that I know all that this means—this that I am saying to you. I know

quivering into the haze of pale daffodil yellow that hung across the west. The sun was only a little way from the horizon now. The furzy hillocks all about caught the lingering light, kept it awhile, then it faded slowly, tenderly away. It was like watching a friend who was saying 'good-bye,' saying it so gracefully that sorrow lost itself in admiration.

But no; it was not 'good-bye' that the friend was saying; it was 'good-evening.' Genevieve had heard the step, and recognised it even before she turned. Her face flushed with a sudden crimson as George Kirkoswald took her hand in his, and held it for a moment, with a strong, warm clasp. They were silent save for the word that the one glance said.

There are always some moments in the one true love of a lifetime that are to be remembered when other moments are forgotten. They have no event in them; there is nothing to be described unless you could describe the stillness of them. They are not moments of hopefulness, nor do they hold the fruition of hope; they hold nothing—nothing but the still, sweet sense of the sureness of all things—all things worth knowing, or being, or having, so far as this life is concerned.

'I have been down to Netherbank,' said Kirkoswald, breaking the silence at last; 'and I also called at Hunsgarth Hags, in the hope of finding you there.'

'Did Miss Craven tell you that I had come up to the moor?'

'Yes. Poor Miss Craven! Did you leave her in tears?'

'In tears! No, but very sorrowful. She is in trouble, and I am troubled for her. I was thinking of her when you came; wondering if one could do anything to relieve her mind but a little from the terrible strain of responsibility. . . . Do you know what her life has been?'

'I have heard something of it—only lately. It is a sad history altogether; but one cannot help being struck by her bravery; I mean with regard to the farm, by her splendid perseverance. As for the other matter, well, perhaps I admire her less there. But, then, I do not understand; perhaps I do not know the truth. Do you know it? Do you think she ever really cared for Crudas?'

'She has cared always—she cares still. I think it is grander than all else in her that her love has never changed—never wavered.

love she had—that she had undoubtedly always had—for this man, whose love was not for her.

Another thought crossed her mind. There was a temptation that she might throw down before him. There were men in the world, she said to herself, who, if they could not give their affection, would at least consent to sell a semblance of it for a fair price. Miss Richmond was not so wealthy as the world supposed her to be, but she knew that she could offer a price which might surely seem fair to a non-provident and not too-successful artist. . . . She thought of it a moment; then she put the thought away. This man was not as other men.

She rose to her feet suddenly at last, and drew her shawl about her. Her hat had fallen to the floor. Bartholomew stooped for it, handed it to her with a look of pain on his face, and Miss Richmond took it quite silently. She did not offer her hand as she went out into the twilight. Her carriage was there. Noel Bartholomew would have gone with her to the gate across the fields, but she turned to decline this last attention. She said no parting word; but Bartholomew, watching as she went, saw the clasping of white hands, the passionate upturning of a despairing face; he heard, too, a cry, a low subdued cry that touched him more nearly to the heart than all that had gone before. Long afterward he heard it echoing, echoing plaintively:

'Is there no hope? . . . none? . . . Will nothing win back hope?'

CHAPTER XXIII.

USSELBY HALL.

'Sometimes from her eyes
I did receive fair speechless messages.'
Merchant of Venice.

It was a satisfaction to Genevieve to know that George Kirkoswald was not spending his Christmas in loneliness at Usselby Crag. He had come down one day from the Hall to tell them that he was going to York for a week or so, to St. Aldhelm's Vicarage, his friend, John Warburton, being Rector there.

‘I should say that he had betrayed himself!’

‘And you would hold him in contempt?’

‘Not without knowing something of the circumstances,’ said Genevieve in her gentle, serious way.

Was there anything like a suspicion dawning across her mind, a suspicion that George’s earnestness had a personal motive behind it? Be that as it might, she had made an opportunity. Here, if anywhere, was an opening for Kirkoswald to speak. Never could any moment more favourable than this await him. The very word had been said that could more than any other word charm out from his heart that hidden thing that lay coiled there like a snake, certain to spring sooner or later, unless it should be drawn out by some sweet note of human music. That note had been sounded, but the lip that should have moved to its sounding remained closed. There was a pause, and the sun dropped down behind the moor, putting an end to the day, and marking the oncoming of the long, drear night.

Stay from blaming Kirkoswald. The strongest men have moments of weakness, of failure of insight, and it must be that some such moments are fatal.

He could not have told you—not then, nor later—what it was that had held him from this thing that he had required of himself. He had decreed that it should be done, and he was not given to the making of vain decrees. Perhaps it was the unexpectedness of the opportunity; or it might be that the moment was too sweet to be rudely broken in upon without consideration as to the manner of doing it. There was no point at which he had said, ‘I will not do it now.’ He had waited, overmastered by his own emotion even as he did so, for some impulse to compel him to his task; but there had been no movement strong enough to be called an impulse. His sole satisfaction afterwards lay in the fact that he had not made resistance; there had been nothing to be resisted.

There was no idea in his mind then that the moment had been decisive in any way. There would be other opportunities; and he would be better prepared, more on the alert to take advantage of them. It was less easy to talk seriously now that they were going down the rugged Ravengates. They went silently for the most part; silently happy, silently certain of happiness to be.

waves for leagues away. It was a day on which to be strong, to be glad, to put away fearfulness if you had any.

The white stony road went winding all the way by the bold edge of Langbarugh Moor. Below the moor there was a great sweep of common all dotted over with gray boulders. To the left a vast dark fir-wood bounded by freestone walls covered the sloping land that lay between the moor and the low-lying Marishes.

The entrance-gate to Usselby was a common five-barred gate in the wall of rude unshapen stone. The drive, which wound between the fir-trees, was a narrow road, full of deep ruts. Tall fronds of fern, still green and graceful, were curving out from beds of warm pine-needles. A squirrel crossed the road; a large handsome magpie dived slowly downward from the blue mystery of the pine-tree shade, another following. Presently some water-fowl rose up suddenly out of a little streamlet, and went chuckling and fluttering away as if quite conscious of providential escape.

The house itself was not out of keeping with its wild surroundings. It was ancient, but you did not think of its date in looking at it; nor did you ask any question as to its architectural order.

It stood a little below the road; the dormer windows of the upper story projected over the lower; the red tiles of the gabled roof were green and gray and yellow with lichens. Dark yew-trees stood in the terraced gardens; wide grass-grown steps led down under the shade to the great arched doorway. A sundial stood in the middle of the lawn.

The old brown door seemed to open of itself; a tall eager figure came hurriedly forward, holding out a hand to Genevieve, uttering words of cordial welcome.

'Come in, come in!' he said. 'To think of your walking so far in such a wind as this! You will have to come in here, it is my study; there is no fire anywhere else. Jael won't allow it as a rule, but she would have made an exception if she had known you were coming. . . . Is there a chair free from books anywhere, Mr. Bartholomew?'

'I think I see one in the distance,' was the reply.

It was a room that had a distance—a long old-fashioned room with a low ceiling and unexpected recesses. Despite its shabbiness there was a prevailing dark warm tone that lent an air of

No poem, no picture could give for an instant the sense of universal benediction that comes down with the full sudden bursting of springtide over the land. There is always a suddenness, always one morning when the tidings are flashed in glad thrilling notes from bough to bough ; when the sunshine is sweeter and milder—the air fuller of quiet promise of blessing. There is always one day when the valleys laugh and sing more gloriously, and when the hills are more joyful together before the Lord.

To every 'flower o' the spring' there is a season, from the first snowdrop that peeps from under the dry, dead leaves at the bottom of the wood, to the last hawthorn bud that bursts on the top of the late white hedgerow.

And yet there is always as it were a meeting of seasons—a time when the flowers come up that they may be together for a while, that together they may try in their beautiful way to make more glad the heart of man—more glad and more good.

'One moment now may give us more
Than fifty years of reason :
Our minds shall drink at every pore
The spirit of the season.

'Some silent laws our hearts may make,
Which they shall long obey ;
We for the year to come may take
Our temper from to-day.'

Ah ! for many years, if that 'inward eye which is the bliss of solitude' be but keen enough of vision.

Yet better even than the after-vision of poets and seers is one free, fresh hour when your footstep falls upon the daisies, having nowhere else to fall for the crowding of them ; when you feel upon your cheek and forehead the cool dainty airs that come up from the blue sea, and reach you through the boughs of tufted larches and tasselled willows ; and when your ear listens entranced—always newly entranced—to the voice of the blackbird that comes to you from the whinbrake on the hill.

There were places in the neighbourhood of Murk-Marishes where Genevieve Bartholomew stood alone and stirless while minutes passed by unnoted ; dim hollows in the fir copses ankle-deep with wild hyacinth ; woodland paths blue with forget-me-not ; moist becksides glossy with unfolding fronds of fern. The

'It is probably some picture that you remember,' said her father.

'It may be,' said George; 'or it may be another instance of that feeling of reminiscence with which we are all of us acquainted. I believe the secret of it to be a sudden sense of affinity. If you meet a man toward whom you are about to be strongly drawn, between whom and yourself any valuable intercourse is likely to be possible, you never meet as strangers meet. The first glance does away with six months of preliminary acquaintanceship.'

Was he thinking of a glance that had met his in Soulsgrif Bight as he spoke? Was he wondering if Genevieve had any glance of him that she cared to remember?

The tea came in presently, the sight of Jael bringing to Genevieve's mind for the first time all that Ailsie Drewe had told of bygone days at Usselby Hall. The old woman's narrow forehead, her suspicious glance, her penurious gown, her independent speech, made that inconceivable piece of local history to be conceivable in a single moment. Genevieve looked round, wondering from which window the irascible old man had fired upon the carol-singers; wondering, too, if his son knew all the strange traditions that were being handed on. Looking at George Kirkoswald she could imagine that there had been pain and darkness somewhere in the unforgotten past.

They went over the house; upstairs into a wide drawing-room with windows that looked seaward; it was hung with frayed and faded satin damask. The carpet was faded, too, and the worn yellow satin of the gilt-and-white chairs looked too dingy to be spoken of as yellow any more.

'I have been told that my mother used to like this room,' said George, with a quiet echo of a dead sadness in his tone. 'She used it always till my sisters died; after that she never left her own room again. . . . That is her portrait,' he continued, taking a miniature from its case and putting it into Genevieve's hand with tender touch and movement.

It was not a beautiful face, even on ivory, but it was strong and pure and compassionate. The eyes were her son's eyes, dark, full of thought, comprehensive of human pain.

There were other portraits in the dining-room below. Ladies in lavender simpered with cold, pale lips; fierce old women with

the pigeons that had come wheeling down at her call. It was just the kind of day on which to be idle—to feel that idleness meant growth and refreshing, and deliverance from spiritual stagnation. But Noel Bartholomew had enjoyed several such days now, and he was beginning to feel that they might have their dangers.

Genevieve, throwing down her last handful of corn, came and sat beside him, and heard all that he had to say of the soft dreamful mood that had come over him.

‘I cannot will my will nor work my work,’

he said, ‘and yet I feel well and happy, or rather happier. It is strange, but I cannot help feeling that this calm is like the calm that comes before a storm.’

‘A hail-storm, perhaps, hailing new ideas down upon you.’

‘No; I am not waiting for ideas. The “Cenone” is all but done. Then I shall finish the “Sir Galahad”; and after that I have it in my mind that I should like to paint a landscape—a great wide sweep of Langbarugh Moor, with a dark gray sky torn and flying before the wind.’

‘Good my father! That must be done. . . . But if I were a painter, now here is my subject coming towards me as shyly as you please. Three little maidens with three little smiles, bearing three little bunches of flowers of the field. And there! three little curtsies dropped like one, to show how manners linger in likely places.’

‘Do you know that Keturah has decided that not another of your flower-maidens is to be admitted into the kitchen this year?’ said Mr. Bartholomew when the children had turned to go, having offered their flowers and received the usual reward of thanks and smiles. ‘She declared to me this morning that there were seventeen of them between school hours and sunset last evening.’

‘Little dears!’

‘I believe you bribe them?’

‘That is precisely what Mrs. Caton said the other day, when I went in laden with the flowers that the children had brought to me as I passed through the village.’

‘What else did Mrs. Caton say?’

'But, Heaven helping me,' he added, 'there shall be little wear and tear that I can keep away from her.'

Just then something—was it a mere passing shadow?—came suddenly down upon him, darkening his forehead, showing the strong lines about his mouth, the cleft that crossed his lower lip, and was visible again on the broad, firm chin. Genevieve, meeting his eyes, could not but wonder at the sudden change. It had come like a shadow, so it departed, leaving light and gladness behind it. Another room or two had to be inspected, and Mr. Bartholomew had to give his opinion on the capacity of each for improvement. The furniture was of all kinds; so, too, were the ornaments; but things had been so long in their places together, they had ministered so long to the needs of the same people, that they had acquired a certain harmony which was not without a beauty of its own. There was little beauty of any other kind. The priceless and abundant treasures of ancient china and glass were all packed carefully away out of sight in garrets and cupboards, and the keys were in Jael's pocket—they had been there for close upon five-and-thirty years now.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ETHICS AND ÆSTHETICS.

'Where we disavow
Being keeper to our brother, we're his Cain.'

MRS. BROWNING.

GENEVIEVE listened quite silently while her father gave the opinions that were asked of him, and she recognised the fact that they were worthy of being listened to. It seemed as if the old place had stirred his decorative instincts to even more than usual activity.

His ideas were not, of course, the latest modern ideas. He made no mention of sage-green or peacock-blue; he did not insist upon screens, or dados, or lily-pots.

'I want to have the thing done once for all,' said Kirkoswald, 'and therefore well done.'

many incentives to gossip, to flippant suggestion, to uncharitable conclusion.

And yet it is easily conceivable that there was not in that Thurkeld Abbas coterie a single individual who would have failed in one single particular to take the part of the Good Samaritan, had Genevieve Bartholomew been found wounded in any of the dark waysides of life, or in any way needing compassion of theirs. It is strange how a human being will stab another to the heart with an unkind word, who could never bear to see that other with an aching finger without trying to relieve the pain. Why should we blunder so? Why but because we have facilely fallen into an ill groove, and make no effort to get out therefrom.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A BEGINNING OF GRIEFS.

‘To this the courteous prince
Accorded with his wonted courtesy,
Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it.’

Idyls of the King.

OBEDIENT to one of the sudden impulses by which his life was mainly ordered, Noel Bartholomew set out alone one morning for a day's sketching. He was not fond of going alone; but not knowing whither his mood and the aspect of the scenery might lead him, he declined the offer of his daughter's company.

‘You will be glad of a day for letter-writing,’ he said. ‘Letters from London have been few and far between of late.’

‘People are sure to forget us if we forget them,’ said Genevieve, feeling some pangs of conscience at the remembrance of a pile of letters docketed ‘unanswered’ on her writing-table.

‘Anyhow, they will forget us!’ replied her father as he turned away.

He was not in a very equable frame of mind. Out-of-doors the spring sunshine intoxicated him, so to speak. He could say things, and think them, and dream them, that were quite impossible to him in the less stimulating atmosphere of his own

them was watching the varying expression of her face somewhat closely.

George Kirkoswald had not forgotten that day in the studio, the girl's cry for a reconciler; nor the instance she had given of need for reconciliation.

'I need hardly ask you if you approve of your father's plans and designs?' he said presently, turning to her with his usual gravity.

'I am thinking them out,' she said, 'trying to realize them. At first I objected to the idea of Indian hangings in an English room decorated with English historical scenes. Then it occurred to me that the histories of the two countries are now so twined together that it would be rather interesting to have combined associations.'

'Thank you for that idea; I agree with it. And you like the rest?'

'I think the result will touch the thing you aim at—beauty.'

'I see,' said George musingly. 'And the aim? You sympathize with it only so far?'

'Only so far.'

'And suspect yourself of wrong-doing even in that,' said her father. 'By the way, I believe you have never explained to Mr. Kirkoswald what I am sure must need explanation, the non-Puritanical nature of your own dress, and of such surroundings as you possess at Netherbank?'

'No, I have not. I have left Mr. Kirkoswald to suppose for himself a fresh instance of feminine inconsistency.'

'Or rather a fresh instance of graceful and womanly concession,' George interposed, 'which is above all consistencies whatever in such matters as this. . . . I have understood.'

'Have you also understood my attitude in the matter?' asked Bartholomew. 'I do not understand it myself. I never pretend to understand the strong human craving for material beauty. Men will ruin themselves to possess it, though they know that the possession will add a new anguish to death itself. Think of Cardinal Mazarin dragging himself from his death-bed to walk round his picture-galleries for the last time, exclaiming, "See this beautiful Correggio, and this Venus of Titian, and this incomparable Deluge of Antonio Caracci! Ah! and I must leave all this, I must leave all this!" It makes one's heart ache to read of it, but it does not enable one to comprehend the secret that lies

had already created was approaching a finer perfection than anything he had given to the world yet.

Her prophecy was fulfilled, not only in the spirit, but also to the letter. As Noel Bartholomew went on through the low-lying pasture-lands that were all golden with the great marsh-marigolds, dappled with daisies, musical with the songs of the thrush and the lark, he thought no more of the neglect of men; and the sense of the lifelong under-appreciation, that he could not but be aware of, ceased to be a pain to him. It would be with him as it had been with Millet—he would sleep, sleep soundly, and men would awake to the knowledge of him and his work when he knew it not. It was very possible on such a morning to feel as Keats had felt, that the daisies were growing over him already, and there was no shadow of grief in the feeling; rather was there a new longing for this perfectness of rest, of which the daisies were whispering, in the lonely marsh lands.

Neither was this mood a permanent one. The next was fuller of hope for the life that now is. The world had not seen his last and best work. A few weeks more and it should be seen. And then and there, thinking of his picture's reception, there sprang another vision-picture to his brain—a fair young Nausicaa, surprised by the wandering Ulysses as she stood among the sedges by the side of the rippling river. He saw her standing as plainly as if she had stood there among the reeds of Murk-Marishes, so plainly that he could wonder at the roundness of her strong white arm, at the grace of her Greek dress, at the surprise that was on her parted lips, and in her lovely eyes—eyes blue as the forget-me-nots that were round him everywhere in Birkgrigg Gill. His way was no more lonely, nor long. Before he awoke from his vision he was out on the hilltop that was almost opposite to Yarrell Croft, and a picture, lovelier than the loveliest dream his brain had ever wrought, lay stretched out before him—a picture that would have tempted him to despair, if nature might so tempt a man.

It was a scene for Turner, and for none other since. The mystery of soft, sunny, pale gold vapour that was upon the distant dales, veiling everything, and with so transparent a veil that nothing was hid, was hardly a thing to be attempted without forethought. Noel Bartholomew sat a long time thinking before he began.

There was a silence, a somewhat lengthened silence.

George Kirkoswald sat looking into the fire ; it was leaping, blowing ; he felt the comfortable warmth of it ; but he felt also a chilliness that the fire could not reach.

A minute or two before he had seen his painted walls, his historic panels, quite plainly ; now it was as if he saw them fading before his eyes. The knowledge that the old damp stains were still there was a satisfaction to him.

Genevieve broke the silence.

'You will not misjudge me,' she said, turning an earnest face toward George Kirkoswald ; 'and you will not suppose that I am judging you, or meaning to legislate for you for a single moment. I told you the other day,' she went on, her lips breaking into a smile as she spoke, 'that I had not stated my case effectively. So far as I remember, I did not state it at all. I hadn't the courage, and went on wandering outside of it. Let me try now to say what I meant then. . . . I did not mean to imply that there was or could be any special wrong in surrounding one's self with any and every kind of material beauty one could obtain. It is possible that the time may come when every desire of the kind may be satisfied without a hint from conscience of anything but approval. Ugliness, commonness, unseemliness, will be considered as blots, mistakes. . . . But has that day come yet? . . . Can any of us dare to say to ourselves in our best and most secret and most sacred moments that this is the time to decorate finely, to dress rarely, to add picture to picture, and ornament to ornament, while all about us the poor are crying silently, or suffering patiently, or turning to stone, in the effort to endure the hardness we do not even see they are enduring? *We do not want to see, and they know it.* And yet they take off their hats and curtsy, and do us little kindnesses when they can, as if they would express a penitence for their unprosperous days. In all this world there is nothing more pathetic, more strangely touching, than the bearing of the respectable poor towards the heedless or apathetic rich ! . . . If I might ask for a gift that should be more to me than all else in this world, I would certainly ask for the pen of a ready writer, ready enough and powerful enough to awaken the souls who are at ease concerning their daily bread, and who never see on any human

‘They please you?’

‘Yes, they do; and do you know, I’ve been thinking a good bit that I should like to have something of yours—something really first-class, you know. I thought once I’d ask you to paint me. And then I thought I would wait a year or two before I was painted.’

‘You are quite right in waiting. Character can only come with years. Holbein used to say that fifty years was the right age for a woman to have her portrait painted.’

‘Fifty! Oh, come, he might as well have said a hundred at once. I shan’t wait till I’m fifty. And I don’t see why I need wait any longer to have some sort of a picture of yours—that is, if you will paint me one. I should like to have one specially done for myself.’

Was the master of Yarrell Croft feeling for once that he actually was the master, now that its mistress was away? He was quite aware of a sudden desire to make an experiment as to the extent of his authority. There might be danger, but the danger was not without its attractions.

‘I have no objection at all to paint a picture for you,’ said Bartholomew, saying it as much out of his natural goodwill and tendency towards concession, as out of any other consideration. ‘But I should wish you to have a clear idea in your own mind as to the kind of picture you would like.’

‘Oh, I know quite well what I like, and an idea has just come into my head that I think would do capitally. Why shouldn’t you turn a little just where you are now, and paint that hillside and Yarrell Croft into the picture you are doing? It would be all right, you know. If you come a bit farther back, you can see the house and all that distance that you have painted at the same time.’

‘So I can,’ said Bartholomew, feeling that that square block of stone would destroy every particle of sentiment that the picture could ever have. Still, it was very natural that the youth should wish, beyond all other things, to have a picture of his own home, the house where he had been born, and where he had lived his untroubled life.

Bartholomew made no objection; he would paint Yarrell Croft, since its owner wished to have it painted.

There was no farm of its size in the neighbourhood that had been more carefully dealt with in respect of rotation of crops, abundance of lime, and almost ceaseless tillage. There were fields of Miss Craven's where the labourers seemed almost to live: but these same fields were not profitable. The soil was stiff clay: the water stood in pools between the lands, not seeming to find its way to such drainage as existed; and the yield of corn was only good in unusually good years. As for the pasture-lands, they were full of moss and whin and picturesque bramble-brakes, and therefore failed to feed the number of cattle they should have fed.

It had been different once, Dorothy said. Labour had cost less, there had been no American supplies to cause fluctuations in the market, and, more than that, there had been no lack of capital. It would have been hard to say exactly how the capital had been drained away; the draining process had probably been going on a long time when that historic snow-storm had buried Joseph Craven's splendid flock of sheep in the hollows of Langbarugh Moor. The old man had felt that to be a kind of final stroke, and he never rallied from it.

There had been a touching scene one morning. Old Joseph had lain awake all night—perhaps he had lain awake many nights; but on this particular morning he felt as if his night's sleeplessness had wrought some change in him. He had gone to his daughter's room quite early—it was hardly light—and she had been roused to a very keen and startling dread by seeing him standing there with an account-book or two, and a box with a few sovereigns in it. There was a strangely haggard look on his face.

'There's nobody but you, Dorothy—nobody but you,' the old man said in a faint, plaintive voice. 'If you'll not take things in hand, there's nobody else; they must go, Dorothy, if you don't look to them.'

Dorothy watched him silently for a moment, then she made him sit down by a little table, while she prepared him a cup of tea. A rose-tinted light was coming up from the sea, flooding all the room; the old man's white head was bowed over his trembling hands. He could hardly turn the pages before him. He seemed as if he found it difficult to understand what he himself had

it in. It was not built on the site of the old priory ; that was too low, too far down in the wood. But that needn't have mattered. We could have kept the name.'

'You might resume it, if you chose,' suggested Bartholomew.

'So we might ; I've said so to Di scores of times, but she's as stiff in her own way as a woman can be, and that's saying a lot. . . . But there, that's the archway ; it's Gothic, you know. Shouldn't you say it was Gothic ?'

'Yes, certainly I should,' said Bartholomew ; 'and I should say it is eleventh-century work, if I may judge.'

It was a great round-headed arch, with plain round mouldings of solid design. The piers and the capitals were completely covered with the strong green ivy that had flourished there for centuries. The wall on either hand had been covered with rude trellis-work, and the clematis that crept in and out was just bursting into leaf. The young sprays were waving in the breeze. Through the archway you could see an old fountain among the greenery of the inner garden. A pair of tortoise-shell butterflies were quivering against the blue sky. The pale bright green of hollyhock leaves brightened part of the ground-space ; lilies and irises were coming up nearer to the gate. The boughs of climbing rose-trees fluttered everywhere, making a frame to a scene that could not fail to be suggestive to the eye of an artist of any insight.

'Why shouldn't you have this painted instead of the house?' asked Bartholomew, with the sense of snatching at means of escape.

'You think this would make a good picture ?'

'Certainly I do. When the summer and autumn flowers are out it must be almost perfect. And garden-scenes are less common than they might be. To say the truth, I have often longed to paint one, and years ago I made some studies of flowers for the purpose, but I have never seen anything like this to inspire me.'

'Oh, very well ; then you shall paint both,' said the young man, speaking rather as Disraeli's Young Duke might have spoken to Sir Carte Blanche. 'How soon can you get them done ?'

Bartholomew smiled.

It had all happened long ago, when Dorothy Craven was quite a girl, a proud, handsome, dark-eyed girl not yet twenty, too proud to be on cordial terms with the daughters and sons of the other farmers of the district. . . . When the worst came, the old proverb that declares that pride always goes before a fall fitted in finely, and Dorothy was made to perceive how pleased her neighbours were to have the satisfaction of fitting it. She had never forgotten that.

Genevieve Bartholomew had never heard the history ; but, as it has been said, she had reasons for believing that there was a history.

Of late the Bartholomews had known, as everybody else had known, that something very like a crisis was coming on at the Haggs. *There had been five bad harvests in succession, cattle had been found dead in the fields, a horse that had fallen over the edge of a stone quarry on the moor had had to be shot, and the result of all this had been that Mr. Damer, the agent for the Yarrell Croft estate, had had to consent to take Miss Craven's rent by instalments.* Further than this, it was known that she was wanting to sell one of her best milch cows ; of course people said that this was in order to enable her to meet the tithes.

The confirmation of it all was there written on Dorothy's face. Her mouth had compressed itself till the droop at the corners was a settled thing ; her colour was fading, leaving only a network of fine red lines on her thin cheeks ; her eyes looked out at you with strangely mingled expressions : pain, defiance, endurance, each came by turns. Had there been a little wistfulness mingled with these of late, Genevieve asked herself ? A little wonder if anywhere in the world there might be compassion ?

One fine February day Genevieve set out for a walk ; she would go up to the moor, she said to herself, and she would call at the Haggs on her way. She had not seen Miss Craven for some days, and the last sight of her had not been reassuring. There had been signs plain enough to be seen, but not easy of comprehension.

There was not much promise of spring anywhere. A few pale snowdrops stood with folded petals in the garden, some lily bulbs were thrusting up strong green leaves ; there was a thrush singing on the boughs of the ash-tree by the stile.

Sometimes, remembering that the home at Netherbank was, after all, only a temporary arrangement, Genevieve would feel as if her pulse stopped for the moment. Day by day the little spot of earth was growing dearer; day by day the fact was becoming more plainly written that for good or for ill her life was one with another life, and it seemed to the girl, in her intense love for the place, as if the affinity which existed between that other soul and her own could hardly be quite the same affinity if it had to exist apart from the moor and the sea, from the birds and the flowers, from the sun on the hills, and the breezes on the cliff-top, from all that made gladsome the days that came and went in the neighbourhood of Murk-Marishes.

They were gladsome still for Genevieve, especially when she was out among the gladness, though no letter came, nor any tidings. It was very foolish, she knew, this half-expectancy, this childish disappointment. How could he write with no pretext for writing? Still, vague wonders came and went, and innocent recallings of the experience of her girlish friends. Sometimes darker visions came. What if Mr. Kirkoswald had yielded to one of his old impulses, and had gone again to the Continent to remain for years? What if it were so? What then? Well, nothing even then but trust and faith, perfect faith in the friendship of George Kirkoswald.

It seemed to her that she had so much ground for her faith; though it was not a matter of proportion.

Going up to the Haggs one day, and entering by the stackyard, she had overheard Dorothy Craven crooning a little song, an ancient love ditty, that ran thus:

‘Nowe rise up wightlye, man, for shame,
Never lye so cowardlee,
For it is told in my father’s halle
You dye for love of me.’

‘I did not know that you could sing, Miss Craven,’ said Genevieve gaily, going round between the stacks to where Dorothy was spreading her laces and linens carefully on the hedge.

Dorothy blushed like a schoolgirl, but she smiled too. She was not annoyed; neither was she so sorrowful as she had been. It was easy to see that in some way or other life was going more easily for her.

them 'at's dead neither, for when a man's gettin' on for thirty years of aage he's oäd aneaf to know right fra wrang. An' Ah knew it was wrang all t' time, an' for that reason Ah never meddled wi' nowt o' t' sort, but when Ah couldn't fairly help myself. An' Ah couldn't help myself that neet, an' Dorothy knew that as weel as Ah did; an' if she'd had mair pity an' less pride, she'd ha' had an easier life nor she hes had. An' it's as much for her sake as my oän 'at Ah want her to gi' waäy at last. But she's as stiff as a stoën—ay, as stiff as a stoän in a wall, she's been fra that daäy to this.'

'Then she thinks that you were to blame?' asked Genevieve, knowing that she must be well up in her case before she undertook to plead with Miss Craven.

'Ay, an' she's right anuff there. Ah was to blame. But what could Ah do? We were goin' to have a bit of a spree at Swarthcliff Top—we allus had a spree o' my birthday—an' poor old father, he kept it up to the last. An' that year 'at Ah's talkin' on he'd set down to goä to Blakehoue Baäy t' day afore, an' just a few hours afore he sud ha' started he was ta'en bad all of a sudden wi' rheumatics, an' Ah were forced to goä i'stead. Ah wasn't nut to saäy eager to goä, but goä Ah did, an' got my two tubs o' Hollands—two fairish-sized tubs they were—an' Ah slung 'em one on either side o' t' oäd galloway, an' kept 'em partly covered wi' t' skirts o' my father's greät-coat. Of course Ah didn't start fra t' Baäy till 't was darkish; an' when Ah gat te t' toon, 'twas as dark as onybody could wish. But as bad luck wud ha' 't, t' bridge was open for a ship to goä through, an' she'd stuck i' the bridge-way; an' there was a gay few folks waitin' to be across, an' Ah was about i' t' middle o' t' crood afore Ah saw 'at there was one. Ah durstn't turn back then for fear o' raisin' suspicion, an' Ah durstn't stand still for fear 'at folks wad see t' tubs. Ah was in a despt takin' for awhile, when all of a sudden Ah bethowt me to use my spurs a bit, an' mak' t' oäd galloway rear. 'Twas almost laughable to see t' folks flyin' back, an' Ah was left i' peäce a bit. But t' crood seän closed in again, one pressin' behind another to get ower t' bridge as seän as 't was shut, an' I had to keep usin' my spurs ivery noo an' then. Another minute an' Ah sud ha' been saäfe, when up comes a man oot of a dark corner. "Let us have

And though she spoke softly and sweetly, something caught up the sound and gave it back again, as if with a touch of mockery :

‘He could never, never fail from his word !’

She remembered it afterward, the repetition where no echo was, the curious touch of contradiction that seemed to be in the repeating voice, even though that voice was still her own.

She was going homeward now, down through the bramble brakes that were green with the young crisp leaves, through the lanes all golden and blue. At the stile by the barley-field she stopped a moment, listening as if suddenly compelled to listen ; and again the spoken word came back to her from the upland, spoken as she had meant it this time, as she had intended it out of her full and fervent faith :

‘He could never, never fail from his word !’

She was still standing there with her hand on the stile when she saw a small, darkly-clad figure stirring inside the hedge. It was Davy Drewe, touching his yellow curls, and coming forward with a blush.

‘Were you waiting for me, Davy ?’ she said, speaking in the half-tender way that had attracted the little fellow so much. ‘Come with me into the house and have some tea.’

‘I mustn’t ; I mustn’t stay no longer,’ the boy said. ‘I’ve stayed a long time, an’ it’s my last night at home. Mother said I might come an’ say “good-bye” as I was goin’ oot foreign.’

‘You are going on a foreign voyage ? Poor child ! and poor mother ! Why, how long will it be before you are back again, Davy ?’

The boy turned pale, very pale, and he lifted his eloquent blue eyes to Genevieve’s face ; but no words would come, or at any rate not the words he would have said.

He could only say that he did not know when he would be back again. The ship was going from port to port, and from land to land, the owners themselves hardly knowing whither. Davy did not seem to care whither, so that he was out on the wild waters again.

‘Are you so fond of the sea ?’ Genevieve asked wonderingly.

‘No, miss, I’m no way fond on it,’ the child said, speaking as

this waäy. And she's nowt to deä but saäy half a word—half a word 'ud do for Ishmael Crudas ; an' there she'd be, mistress o' Swartheliff Top—as tidy a farm as you'll find i' the three Ridings, an' all my oän ; not a steän nor a sod mortgaged to nobody. Ah've had things settled i' my oän mind this mony a year—ay, down to the varry chairs old Joseph an' Barbara 'ud ha' to sit on, an' the corner where they'd sit. Dorothy knows they would want for nowt 'at money could get 'em ; neither sud she, an' she knaws that an' all. . . . But seems as if 'twas all o' no use. Ah've gone ower 't all ageän to-daäy, but 'twas like teamin' water intiv a sieve. . . . Mebbe it 'ud be different if you could saay a word, miss. Dorothy thinks a lot o' what you saay !'

There was just a touch of gentle enviousness about the last sentence. The man's shrill voice softened and broke as he said it: 'Dorothy thinks a lot o' what you saay.' It was almost as if he had lifted a veil for a moment, and had given a glimpse of the strong, patient love that was in him. It must have been very patient ; perhaps it was patience that had worked such hope—hope that had never failed though the years had counted well-nigh twice the service of Jacob for Rachel.

CHAPTER XXVI.

LOVE AND PRIDE.

'But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining.
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between,
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.'

COLERIDGE.

NOT wishing to step straight into the middle of milking-time, Genevieve had to hurry upward toward the Haggs. Miss Craven, strange to say, was standing near the garden-gate, looking pale and abstracted. . She had only a faint smile of welcome, yet she was

of the hedge. Again the mother stood bleating to it, then she ran on, looking back enticingly, eagerly, saying plainly, 'Follow me, try to follow me !'

What could be done in such a strait? Genevieve wondered, endeavouring in vain to extricate the small creature herself. She would ask her father to come—but no, here was help nearer. Someone was coming down from the moor—someone on horse-back—and seeing a daintily-clad figure in the lane, he came more quickly.

'Oh, you have come back ! you have come back again !' Genevieve exclaimed, hardly knowing the words she used in her sudden surprise and gladness. There was a glad, living light in her eyes, a glow of glad colour on her face. She stood there, watching George Kirkoswald, who had dismounted, and was taking the lamb in his arms tenderly, carefully, lest he should tear the wool. Then he put it back into the field again with its mother, using such gentleness as strong men do use, having pity for all weak things.

'You were sure to come,' said Genevieve, who was waiting for him in the lane, standing there tall, and straight, and happy, and beautiful—beautiful with a quite new beauty; or so George thought as he took her two hands in his silently. 'You were sure to come,' said the girl, 'since I was needing help.'

'Then you have never needed me till to-day?'

'I did not say that.'

'No ; you left me to infer it.'

'I am not answerable for your inferences,' she said, speaking the ungentle words quite gently. . . . 'What else do you infer?'

'I infer that you have been very happy these five weeks.'

'That is correct ; I have been happy.'

'During my absence?'

'During your absence.'

They still stood there in the shadow of the crisp green hedgerow, through which the yellow sun was struggling. Genevieve had disengaged one hand, and was patting the red-roan flank of Bevis. The first corn-crake of the year was uttering its rhythmical 'crek-crek' in the meadows beyond.

'Haven't you any more questions to ask?' said Genevieve,

For Dorothy it was as if it were all happening over again as she stood there, it came back so vividly, so full of strong pain; and ever Genevieve felt as if it were hard to realize that the whole of her life, and more, was lying between.

'You say you promised that you would say a word or two for him,' Miss Craven went on; 'but I don't think you'll say much 'at I haven't said to myself. I've had time enough. All the best o' my days has gone i' sorrow—*they're gone!* If I marry him now will they come back again? Could I ever be young again as I was then, an' full o' hope an' happiness? . . . Happiness! I've forgotten what it's like. I've forgotten what everything's like but loneliness, an' hard work, an' dread o' failin'. Do you think I could forget these things now, an' take up my life again where he broke it off? If I could forget, then I might forgive; but I don't feel like forgettin', nor forgivin' neither. I've known what it was to feel a good deal more like goin' mad wi' tryin'.'

'Is that your greatest difficulty—that you can't forgive?' asked Genevieve sympathetically. 'Do you know, I think I can understand that. I have always felt as if forgiveness of a person who had actually and wilfully wronged another was one of the very hardest virtues that a human being could be called upon to practise. But, then, the kind of wrong that I think I could not forgive must have been done deliberately, and out of *malice prepense*. This wrong that was done to you was not like that; there was no thought of wronging you at all. And surely it has been repented of? I think I could never help forgiving a person who repented, who was but ever so little sorry for having done me harm!'

'Well, wait till you've tried! I hope that'll never be; but if it is, think o' what I've told you to-day. Do you think I wouldn't forgive if I could? Do you think I like livin' out all my days full o' sourness, an' bitterness, an' hardness toward all the world? Do you think I wouldn't like to be as you are—gentle, an' pleasant-spoken, an' kind to everybody? . . . Sometimes I've hated to look at you, because you were so young, an' free from trouble, an' had such an easy, lightsome sort o' life. The contrast was brought ower near. But don't go dwellin' o' that. It's past. I'm glad you came to-day; I'm glad there's one to understand a little.

homeward over Langbarugh Moor. Genevieve sauntered slowly along the path through the field that was all one mist of green with the springing corn ; she was saying to herself softly, yet tremulously :

‘ Fain would I dwell on form, fain, fain deny
What I have spoke : but farewell compliment ! ’

CHAPTER XXX.

AT THE RECTORY.

‘ The high that proved too high ; the heroic for earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard ;
Enough that He heard it once : we shall hear it by-and-by. ’

BROWNING : *Abt Vogler*.

THE Rectory at Thurkeld Abbas was an old red-brick house, standing in a high-walled garden. Trees drooped over the wall. There were great dark doors at the bottom of the avenue. Inside the doors you came upon a square damp lawn, at the top of which the house stood, tall and narrow, and sombre-looking. The windows were narrow too, and the shabby dark-red curtains gave no brightness to them. It was just the house where you would expect to find an austere and elderly housekeeper.

The austere housekeeper had in the beginning objected to the residence of Mr. Severne at the Rectory, but Canon Gabriel had set her objections aside with as much firmness as quietness. The coming of the new curate had been the great event of his later life.

Almost at once the young man had stepped into the place of the dead son for whom the Canon had gone softly all the days of so many years. There was a spiritual likeness, none other, but it was strong enough to make the new affection as beautiful as it had been quick of growth.

There had been no upsetting of the old man’s way of life. He sat alone during the morning in his own study as he had always done. Mr. Severne’s study was in a distant part of the house. In

say anything I ought not to say. Think that I am your sister ; and let me speak as a sister might ; let me try to show you what I think I see. It seems to me that if one can see rightly where a hindrance or a difficulty lies, it is so much easier to get over it. And I do want you to get over this difficulty. I do want to know that you are not intending to go on darkening the days that might be so bright ; so different for yourself, and for another. And why is it all ? What is the real strait through which you cannot pass ? What is it but a feeling that you can neither define nor defend ?'

Miss Dorothy listened in silence, but it was easy to see that it was not offended silence. No ; there was no offence in it ; but only pain, only a keen sense of isolation. The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and no other heart can know it. This is true always ; but more sadly is it true when the sorrow is one that has linked itself with the years, woven itself with the life, coloured every thought, darkened every joy, and embittered every grief. How should this girl understand ? How should she be able to go back over such a life, to enter into its fine mesh of miseries, its coarse humiliations ; to have sympathy with its calm despairs, its wild unrests, its ceaseless longing for some reparation that should be as great as the suffering had been ? If Miss Craven had a favourite passage in the Bible it was certainly that passage of the grand Psalm of Moses, wherein he prays for adequate compensation : ' Comfort us again now after the time that Thou hast plagued us ; and for the years wherein we have suffered adversity.'

When Genevieve left the Haggs she did not carry with her much sense of assurance. No word had been said that could be construed as a word of actual concession. Yet surely Ishmael Crudas had some ground for his hoping ; surely he had seen, as Genevieve had seen, that there was, unsuspected perhaps by Miss Craven herself, a tremulous wavering of emotion, a balancing of thought, a sense of fainting under the strife, betokening anything rather than a continuance of stern unyieldingness.

How could it be that such unyieldingness had been possible so long ? Genevieve wondered over it as she walked up the Ravensgates toward the moor. She would just go up there and watch the sun sink down into the far distance. It was worth while walking a long way to see that, to watch the warm purple of the moor

more of regret and self-reproach. The Canon had given gentle hints before, and the curate had made good resolutions; but, alas! the instinct, the craving was not there, and until reading became a matter of conscience, there would be no real change. This the Canon had perceived, without being able to understand it. He had been a devourer of books from boyhood himself; they had been as the very life of his intellectual life, and he valued them accordingly.

'I suppose it has always been so with you, Ernest?' he asked after a time, using, as he often did, the young man's Christian name.

'I'm afraid it has. I used to get into trouble about it. At home I got chaffed awfully. My sister Violet tells everybody that I have never read but three books—*Pearson on the Creed*, *The Life of St. Francis de Sales*, and *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*.'

This was told with such innocent gravity that it became the Canon's turn to laugh. The old man had laughed more during the past few months than he had done from his Oxford days till now. Presently he sent Mr. Severne to his study for the last number of the *Quixotic Review*.

'I shall begin a course of training, Severne,' he said, when the young man returned. 'You shall read to me in the evenings, and I will choose your books, taking care to choose such as must interest you, and then we will talk them over together. The appetite will come so, if you will only persevere. . . . Come, now, try to look a little less resigned.'

The article in the *Quixotic* which had attracted the Canon's attention had every appearance of having been written to crystallize its author's own opinions. The matter of it was a plea that some thought might be given to the amusements of the people, more especially in remote districts, a subject on which Canon Gabriel had pondered long and often. More than once he had talked it over with Mr. Severne, mentioning, more especially, his desire to do something down in Soulsgrif Bight. But they had sadly concluded that it would be almost impossible to do anything there, since there was not even a barn that could be turned to use. If only a room could be built, a good schoolroom that could be used for other purposes, then something might be

She might have been married many times—my father told me that—but she has never cared except for this one man, who has made all the best of her life to be one long sorrow. . . . I think it is beautiful !

‘Yes,’ said Kirkoswald, looking into Genevieve’s face, and seeing there the deep interest, the keen animation that awoke there always to the lightest human touch. ‘I think love is always beautiful !’

‘If it be true,’ said Genevieve, watching the descending sun and the deepening yellow haze. The two were still standing by the edge of the furze-brake where they had met.

‘Yes, if it be true,’ repeated Kirkoswald, a sudden inquiry leaping, so to speak, into his eyes. ‘What made you say that ?’ he asked in a low tone that had concern in it.

Genevieve smiled at his seriousness.

‘I said it because we were speaking of love that is beautiful ; and it seems to me that its whole beauty lies in its truthfulness—in its unchanging truthfulness.’

George Kirkoswald remained silent awhile. Lately he had been conscious of unrest—of dread. This great and growing love that was dominating him so utterly could hardly be said to have sole possession of his faculties. There was room for fear—fear for the effect of disclosure and confession. How could one so simple-minded, so noble in intent, so direct in aim as Genevieve, understand a blind swerving, an almost inexcusable self-delusion, and all that had followed upon such a delusion ? And if she should not understand, what then ? Would she have pity ? Would she condemn ? Would her love shrink back in disesteem ?

Kirkoswald had made up his mind that he would confess that long-past mistake of his before he urged his love ; and the resolution was a hindrance in his path already. The confession would be so hard to make. Had not the word that had just now been said made it even harder ?

‘I suppose,’ he began after a time, ‘that you could never understand that there might be two kinds of love ?’

‘Yes,’ replied Genevieve, ‘I think I could. I think I could see that there might be a false love and a true.’

‘And what should you think of a man who had been betrayed, so to speak, into a love that was not true ?’

mind at present being not so much the inability of the working man to keep life in himself, as his inability to make the best of his life when he has it. Is not that Scripture true for him also—'To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. . . . A time to plant; a time to build. . . . A time to laugh; a time to dance'? Will it always mean that the time to plant and to build is Gurth's, and the time to laugh and to dance his master's? I would that his master would think of it.

"There is a good deal of thinking to be done on this head—hard, earnest, human thinking; and if any man can bring but the germ of an idea, let him bring it in God's name. The problems connected with rational recreation for those who most need it are beneath no man's consideration. Enough has been said in contemptuous description of the pleasures of certain classes. 'Arry, as he displays himself on Bank holidays, presents a sufficiently striking theme for a telling newspaper or magazine article. His yellow shoddy ulster, his magenta necktie, his shiny boots, are 'points' that can hardly escape the meanest observation. We believe in his devotion to the big earthen bottle; we acquiesce in the opinion that denies him appreciation of any art, science, or literature whatever; but we are bound in the name of humanity to maintain that 'Arry is not the utterly hopeless being that some hold him to be.

"Take what view we will of the classes typified by Gurth and 'Arry, we cannot deny that their mental, moral, and æsthetic condition is at least as much a consequence as a cause—a consequence of bad government, of ignorance in high places, of selfishness, of thoughtlessness, of Cain-like mind among the followers of Christ. 'Am I my brother's keeper?' The question goes up daily and hourly. There are men and women whose whole life of ease and luxury, from the cradle to the grave, is one ceaseless preference of the query. And all the while the brother's blood is crying from the ground in tones and voices that we only acknowledge as sounds that jar upon our exceeding great refinement."

Canon Gabriel stopped here and looked toward his listener, half expecting to see a confused endeavour to recall a wandering eye; but instead he saw a serious face fixed earnestly on his.

'You are not to brood *too* intently over Miss Craven's troubles,' said George as they stopped at the stile to exchange a parting word. He spoke with all the tender authoritativeness that Genevieve loved so much to hear. 'If you will promise me that, I will promise to think the matter over myself,' he added.

'Ah! then you are thinking of something already,' Genevieve exclaimed, turning her face to his with delight written on every feature. 'You see some gleam of hope, or you would not speak so.'

'I see some very brilliant gleams of hope,' said Kirkoswald, speaking with a quiet yet ardent eagerness; and taking Genevieve's hand in his as he spoke, he held it there in his strong grasp. 'The whole world is radiant with hope to me now,' he exclaimed; 'and it is such a radiance as I have never seen before, nor dreamed of. . . . Heaven keep it unclouded!'

He raised Genevieve's hand, pressing the small white wrist with a passionate respectfulness to his lips for one moment; then, with a glance that pled eloquently for pardon, he turned away.

For an instant it seemed cruel that he should go—strange that he should be so equal to the pain of parting. But it was only for an instant. The echo of his footstep died softly into the distance; the silver stars came out overhead; the entrancement of still, sweet restfulness came down through the twilight. It was an entrancement that did not depart with the twilight; it stayed, and dwelt under the thatched roof, over which the thick ivy was clustering, and made of the life lived there one long act of fervent gratitude.

CHAPTER XXVII.

'I WOULD I HAD SOME FLOWERS O' THE SPRING!'

'The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.'

WORDSWORTH.

To have lived but for one spring in the very heart of spring is to have had a joy that might be desired by the angels.

manner. Mr. Severne was blushing his greetings. He had been glad to come, and he could not indulge any doubts about the opportuneness of his coming.

The Canon had brought his Review with him. He was an old man; sometimes death came near to him, nearer than anybody knew; and if there was anything to be done, he was always eager that it should be done with as little delay as might be. He drew George Kirkoswald aside, and went right to the heart of the matter that was interesting him so much.

'Meeting you here is better fortune than I had hoped for,' Canon Gabriel said. 'I wanted to see you, to try to enlist your sympathies. Knowing that you go down to Soulsgrif Bight so often, knowing other things, too, I was sure that you would help if you only saw the matter as I see it, as the writer of this article sees it. It will not be easy to find sympathy for anything that seems so indirectly philanthropic. People will give money for coals and blankets, as indeed it is right they should, but I doubt if they will look favourably upon a scheme that professes to provide amusement only—amusement for those who have no hereditary right to it.'

'It will be a question of time,' said Kirkoswald—'time and patient persevering effort. The people who blame the labouring man for spending his money at the village alehouse must certainly admit that at present it is too often the sole spot where he has any chance of forgetting his labour, his many cares. If people will only look, they will see that his life is one long dull round of unrelieved drudgery, and I think they will hardly refuse to relieve it by so much as you will ask of them.'

'You are hopeful?' the Canon said. 'I am glad of that. You make me feel more hopeful than I was. . . . I think you said that you had seen this paper in the *Quixotic Review*?'

'Yes,' said George Kirkoswald, 'I have read it.' He could not help glancing at Genevieve as he made the admission. She had the Review in her hand. From the moment that her eye had fallen upon the open page she had found that every turn of every phrase was for her an expected turn. She gave back a smile for his glance.

'I was wondering how you would answer,' she said.

sloping sides of the Gill were overgrown with a rich luxuriance of large pale primroses; with fragile, trembling, pink-tipped anemones; and dark scented violets were there, with timid white woodruff. The purple orchis stood up strong and firm in the green pasture-lands; the glowing yellow Mary-buds filled the marshes; the daffodils

'That come before the swallow dares,
And take the winds of March with beauty'—

these danced only in favoured spots; one spot most favoured being the orchard at the back of the cottage at Netherbank.

Genevieve had hardly known what to make of the thick clusters of crisp green lanceolate leaves that had thrust themselves through the grass and the dead undergrowth in such fine profusion. Her father kept an amused and deliberate silence, even though he was called out from the studio daily to witness some amazing change, or growth, or new development. It was so with every leaf and bud that was responding to the spring sunshine in the little front garden. Everything gave a quite distinct delight, because it was so good as to come up *there*, and be watched by one who had never before watched a flower growing, and unfolding, and coming to its tints, its curves, and full perfections. The daffodils were somewhat slow of development, as became their stately ways; the slender green buds came very gradually to their fuller form and finer tint. Then all at once a dozen or so among them began to bow their heads—to be ready for the great crisis of their lives, the crisis proving to the world that their long promise had not been given out of vain self-estimate. They stood there at last, the shell of silver-brown tissue thrown back, the great wide-open, amber-tinted cup quivering proudly on the strong stem, the paler petals standing round like rays round a pictured saint. Yes, they stood there; and they danced to the music of the Æolian harp that was in the apple boughs; and the birds sang to the same; and, altogether, you know that it was good to be at Murk-Marishes in the spring o' the year.

'I wonder if the delight of it could be of too rare a nature to one not used to it?' Noel Bartholomew said one day. He was sitting on the edge of the old draw-well. Genevieve was feeding

'It is a Chapter,' said Mr. Severne. 'We are arranging parish-work.'

'Yes? . . . You were speaking of music. Are you musical, Sir Galahad?'

'N—no; that is, I'm awfully fond of music, but I don't play—not much.'

'I meant to suggest that Mr. Severne should be conductor,' said George Kirkoswald, 'if he will be so kind. The probability is that he will be required to be several things.'

'And your dream of giving concerts is actually threatening fulfilment?' said Mr. Bartholomew. 'Well, success to it! But I confess myself unable to see in what exactly the success is to consist.'

'Success for me,' said Kirkoswald, 'would consist in knowing that I had turned aside for one hour the current of thought that was driving to distraction one weary brain. The man might have to go back to his care, to his trouble, but he would not go back the same man. The break in his ideas would certainly have wrought change, if not strength, if not some help diviner still.'

'For me,' said Genevieve, 'success would consist in feeling that by means of music I had spoken of things beyond the power of words to reach or touch, but not beyond the power of the most ignorant *to feel*. It is in that that I think the distinction of music lies, as compared with the other arts. It passes beyond them, so to speak, into regions where they seldom attempt to follow, the regions of unexpressed and inexpressible emotion, of spiritual aspiration. And it is distinct, too, in that it acts so easily and readily upon the uneducated and untrained intellect. A man who cannot read, who cannot even see what your picture is intended to represent, can yet be moved, softened, stirred to a mood not his own by:

“‘Music that gentlier on the spirit lies
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes.’”

'And you, Sir Galahad?' asked Bartholomew.

'I? Oh, well, I think my idea of success would require some of Miss Bartholomew's music to express it.'

'It is beyond the reach of words?'

'No; but the words are beyond *my* reach.'

'Are you answered, Bartholomew?' asked Canon Gabriel.

'She said many things. Would they interest you?'

'Some of them might. Mrs. Caton often says interesting things.'

'So she does; especially when they are a little spiteful.'

'That is spiteful of you, my dear.'

'It is; and I recall it.'

'What made you say it? It was not like you. Was your visit an unpleasant one?'

'It was not particularly pleasant. Why should Mrs. Caton have asked me about—about Mr. Kirkoswald? She wanted to know if I could tell her why he had stayed three months at Usselby after writing to tell old Charlock that he was coming for three nights? . . . How do people get to know of such things? And why should they care?'

'Was that the worst you had to endure?'

'There was more of the same kind. I was asked what Mr. Kirkoswald was doing in London now,' replied Genevieve, her colour deepening to a lovelier tint, even under her father's gaze. 'Mrs. Caton had heard that he had gone up to buy furniture. I could only tell her that I did not know; and that Mr. Kirkoswald had told you that he was going up on business. I had also to confess that I did not know when he was coming back; that I did not know how long he meant to stay at Usselby when he did come; and that I did not know whether he was ever going to live on the Continent again or not. And all the while I had the satisfaction of feeling that neither Mrs. Caton nor her friends quite believed in my ignorance.'

'Well, that was rather trying for you. . . . It is, as you say, wonderful how people get to know of things in small towns; more wonderful still that they should take so inexplicable an interest in what does not concern them.'

'Oh, it is not what they know that makes the strangeness of it; it is what they conjecture! If they would only cease from conjecture!'

They were hardly likely to cease with such attractive ground to go upon; the delicate nature of it, the uncertainty of its present passages, the important possibilities it held for the future—all these things, that should have inspired a kind silence, were as so

do what you will with Gurth, or 'Arry, or any other hopeless individual whatever. Not only shall his time to plant and to build be devoted to the needs of you and yours, but his time to laugh and to dance—if any—shall be delivered over to the passionate ardour of your benevolent will whenever you shall choose to claim it. . . . There, you have my final word as to the nature of the success I would have you aim at, but not my final prayer for its achievement.'

Canon Gabriel went away soon after this, and Sir Galahad with him. They talked all the way home of the music-room that was going to be built, and of the things that might be done in it another winter.

'Have you any idea who it is that is going to build the room?' asked the curate.

'Yes,' said Canon Gabriel, 'I think I have an idea. I think I perceive why a thank-offering is to be put up in Soulsgrif Bight. . . . Have you forgotten the day of the storm?'

CHAPTER XXXI.

A LANDSLIP.

'Antonio
Will keep his promises. If he have once
Declared himself thy friend, he'll care for thee
When thou neglect'st thyself.'

GOETHE: *Torquato Tasso*.

THE April showers had delayed their coming till the beginning of May, then they had come rushing down upon the thirsty leaves and flowers in a sprightly, generous way that made you feel as you watched and listened as if it were your own thirst that was being allayed. You were glad because the hills and the dales wer glad.

When the rain had gone there was such a freshness, such a crisp, mossy greenness, that you almost wondered that the world should have seemed such a beautiful world before. And the sunshine was brighter and clearer; it seemed to penetrate every-

studio or the cottage fireside. But there was always reaction ; always after each hour of expansion, of spontaneity, of vivid, passionate insight, there came a dozen hours of doubt, of vague, nameless pain, of chill sitting by the ashes of the dead fire.

It was not new to him, this alternation, this change from swift flight over the sunlit regions of possible achievement to chains and darkness on the barren ground. It is new to no man over whose soul the thing called genius tyrannizes. But Bartholomew was becoming aware of changes in the manner of the tyranny ; aware, too, that his seasons of desolation were more prolonged, more frequent ; worse than all, they were in a manner unaccountable.

That long dead time of gloom which had followed upon his bereavement had not been in itself a matter for wonder, for perplexity. It had been understood of all men, up to their measure, and most men had sympathized—that up to their measure also.

It was different now. There had been no new bereavement, no new shock, and the paralysis of his creative powers was in itself of a different nature. It was creeping upon him by slow and irregular degrees.

This was his own idea. He did not share it. No one divined it.

Genevieve only saw that since that autumn day when he had set his palette in the new studio at Netherbank, he had worked more or less steadily, and with more or less of success. She had anticipated a period of comparative inactivity ; she had almost hoped for it of late, that her father might have rest. A long, peaceful, unvexed rest that was not the rest of incapacity would give him back the power to place himself where he had stood when he was most conspicuous in the sight of men, or higher still, it might be. He had not touched the limit yet ; of this she was certain.

So it was that this depression of mood did not move her to any new or lively fear. ‘ Anyhow, they will forget us ! ’ he said as he went out ; and Genevieve smiled, watching him as he crossed the field where the young green barley was springing. ‘ He will have a vision of another and more glorious Ænone before he reaches Birkrigg Gill,’ the girl said to herself, knowing that the Ænone he

It amused him to think that there would be this matter of difference between them. It should never be other than an amusement. He would give up every wish he had rather than cause a sense of strain.

Of course he knew well enough that no serious strain would ever be put upon him. Genevieve was not likely to insist upon ugliness, or meanness, or unseemliness of any kind. The little warfare that was to be would be all delight; and a cause of opportunities to be anticipated with eagerness.

This was the mood he was in during those bright spring days that followed upon his return from London. He had come back impatient, thirsting for settled knowledge of the future, determined to put an end to the shadow of suspense that now and then dimmed his present felicity. But, as we have seen, opportunity had not been favourable to him. The coming of Canon Gabriel and Mr. Severne to Netherbank that April afternoon had wrought a more dangerous delay than anybody who knew of it had conceived.

Trusting that fate had thwarted him sufficiently, he started for Netherbank once more. It was the crispest and greenest of the days of early May. His own pine woods were blue with hyacinth, everybody's hedges were whitening with the bursting hawthorn buds, spring being at least a month in advance that year, and showering down promises everywhere for the more important autumn.

It was yet early in the afternoon when he reached the thatched cottage; the very smoke from the chimney seeming as if it curled in some special way for him. Strong as he was, and self-contained as he looked, his heart was beating, his eyes alight, his voice not steady when Keturah opened the door, and dashed down his hopes with the information that her master and mistress had gone out; adding that they had seemed uncertain as to whether they should go up to the moor or down to the sea.

Kirkoswald reflected a moment. If they had gone upward he must have met them, or seen them in the distance. Then with an impatient good-day to Keturah, who stood mischievously smiling, he dashed downward, hardly stopping even to indulge his own thought by the way until he stood by the side of

When he did begin he worked with a will, and the result was not wholly distasteful to him. Yet he was not satisfied. No artist, no poet, no sculptor is acquainted with satisfaction.

He was standing back from his easel, wondering if he had made the cloud-shadow that was upon the trees that divided one dale from another dark enough. He was afraid of disturbing the sense of mystery that he had achieved. It was the one thing that he had desired to achieve.

Quite suddenly, as he stood there, he became aware of footsteps close to him. A figure was coming striding up the hillside pathway that was all grown over with meeting briars and wild raspberry-canes. 'Oh, it is Mr. Richmond!' he said, holding out his hand. 'I did not know that you were at home; we had heard that you were in London.'

'No such luck! My sister is there; she's been there this three weeks,' said the young man, with a touch of something that might be displeasure, or might be disconsolateness. 'But don't let me interrupt you,' he added courteously. 'I saw you were here; I could see you from the billiard-room window, and I thought I would just come over and watch you a bit, if you don't mind. . . . It's awfully slow being by one's self.'

'That seems to be the general finding of poor humanity,' replied the artist. 'And so far from objecting to your coming, I am obliged by it. . . . What do you think of the sketch?'

'Ah, that's capital! Now, I should call that first-class, if it were a little bit clearer. Why, you've even got Craig's old house and the stunted oak by the mere. It's water-colour, isn't it? What a splendid picture it would make in oil, wouldn't it?—especially if you could put a little more colour into it. You've got that distance to perfection. Still, I always like oil-painting best. Shall you do that over again in oil?'

'Yes, probably.'

'And I suppose you intend it for London, for some of the exhibitions?'

'That is not certain. . . . I very seldom send my work to the exhibitions.'

'Don't you? Well, I thought I hadn't seen your things about much. They're awfully good.'

had never liked to think of that day much. He was conscious of something that impressed him with an air as if of mystery—an undercurrent that he could neither define nor understand. He did not indulge the feeling, but it did not on that account fail to come back again and again. It had come back now; but he pressed onward to his work. He had given his word, and it would be easier to keep it than to break it, considering circumstances all round.

Genevieve and Kirkoswald sat by him for a time; and they saw that he was working slowly, dubiously.

‘Don’t try any longer, father, since you are not in the mood,’ Genevieve begged tenderly.

‘I must try, dear, since Nature’s mood happens to be such a very glorious one.’

‘It is glorious!’ said Kirkoswald; ‘and I was just thinking that I should like to show Miss Bartholomew something more of the gloriousness of Birkrigg Gill, that is, if we may leave you for a little while. There is a favourite spot of mine a little higher up the ravine, a spot where I used to come when I was a boy to get the wild cherries. . . . You are not too tired?’ he asked of Genevieve as they turned to go.

It was hardly possible to be tired on such a day, in such an hour. There are moments of life when people seem lifted above the possibility of physical pain, sometimes above mental pain too if it lie quite apart from the exaltation of the moment. For that time it is another existence that one lives. The gates of another world are set open, one enters in, and the doors are shut upon the old world, the world of doubt and care, of suffering and humiliation.

Genevieve and George Kirkoswald entered in by an arching avenue of misty trees, misty with buds and plumes, with tufts and tassels—with the green leaves of the young sycamore, and the golden-brown of the bursting oak-boughs. The true glory of the Gill just then was the white and the pink-white blossoms of the wild fruit-trees for which the place was famed. The clusters of bloom were on the wild cherry; the great crab apple-trees threw long pink-blossomed sprays up against the blue heavens, backward against the dark-brown rock, forward over the flower-decked path-

He sat a little longer, working at the distance. He would have to come again, and yet again, perhaps many times, if he did this thing that Cecil Richmond wished to have done. He felt instinctively that nothing in the way of generalization would be appreciated. Every window and door, every tree and shrub, every gate and every hedgerow, would have to stand in its place. He seemed to see his sketchy, vaporous picture growing into a coloured photograph before his eyes.

Cecil Richmond had seated himself among the moss and the thick primrose-leaves that covered the bank-side, and he sat there with his head thrown back, his arms folded, a cigar between his lips—the very personification of youth satisfied with itself, with its antecedents, with its present prosperity, with its future prospects. Bartholomew could not help looking at him from time to time, wondering at him, not envying him.

Almost he liked him. If he were uncultivated, he was ingenuous, or seemed so. If he were not without ostentation, neither was he without the small courtesies and deferences that lie on the surface of social life, and are so pleasant and useful.

‘You will come over and have some luncheon?’ he said as Bartholomew began to pack up his brushes; and it may be that the artist would have been glad to accept the invitation had nothing prevented him. But he was prevented. The knowledge that he would not have gone to the house for luncheon had Diana Richmond been there, was sufficient to keep him from it when she was not there.

The invitation was pressed, and again declined, but Bartholomew went homeward by the same way that young Richmond went.

‘If you are going back by the moor,’ said Cecil, ‘come through the gardens; it will save you half a mile at least. . . . Have you ever been over the place? It was a priory once, you know—Yarrell Priory. That old archway—you can see it from here—was an arched gateway in the walls of the priory gardens, so they say. That, and the bits of masonry about it, are all that is left of the old establishment. My great-grandfather built this house, and an old Puritan he must have been. He wouldn’t have the name kept up, but must needs call the house after the field he had built

of the reed-sparrow; the cuckoo far away, calling, calling, never weary of calling to the spring.

Another sound broke upon the stillness presently. It was George Kirkoswald's voice, a manly voice subdued with a woman's tenderness. 'Do you know that I am all but twice your age, my child?' he asked, looking with serious look into the perfect face beside him. A pink flush answered him even as he spoke. Yet Genevieve made other answer.

'Yes, I know it,' she said, lifting her dark beautiful eyes to his.

'How long have you known it?'

'Always—always since I have known you.'

'And it does not—it makes no difference to you?'

'Yes; it makes a difference,' the girl said. She was answering quite quietly, with a certain strength that came of natural straightforwardness, of absence of coquetry, of rare simplicity of soul. 'Yes: it makes a difference. I am glad always that you are older.'

'Tell me why, Genevieve?'

The girl looked up again with a quick, happy light in her eyes, and a deeper glow almost flashing into her face.

'I *have* wanted to hear you say that!' she said with childlike eagerness, childlike guilelessness.

'I have said it many times. It is so beautiful, so like music, I could not help saying it. . . . I may always say it now?'

'Yes; you may say it always.'

Was that some heavy footstep coming crashing down among the undergrowth on the rocks above? It seemed as if the very stones and the stems of the trees were cracking and rending asunder. George Kirkoswald started, looked upward just in time, just in time to save the life of Genevieve Bartholomew once again; perhaps, indeed, his own life also.

Genevieve had not understood—there had been no time to understand. She had only heard the riving, snapping, craunching sounds; she had only felt, as it were, the shiver of the earth, then, even while a strong arm was clasping her, almost flinging her outward from the path, there came the thunderous thud of fallen rock. Where she had stood with her hand in George Kirkoswald's one moment before, the nearer half of the cleft

'It will take some time to paint two such pictures as you seem to desire,' he said; 'that is, unless I do them on a very small scale.'

'Oh. but I don't want them on a small scale,' said Cecil. 'I like a picture that you can see across the room as you sit by the fireside.'

'There I agree with you,' said the painter.

A silence followed. Bartholomew was in a momentary perplexity. Should he ask this new and imperious patron of the fine arts to consider so unimportant a thing as price, or should he not? It evidently was unimportant to him. It was a matter on which Noel Bartholomew had always been stupidly sensitive, and it was quite within the range of things that Cecil Richmond should take offence, and imagine that Bartholomew was sceptical as to his power to pay for the commissions he had given.

So it was that silence came about. The two men parted at the gate that opened into the field pathways above the house, and Bartholomew went on his way alone. 'I can make it all right,' he said to himself as he went on; 'I need not ask the price I should get in the market.'

CHAPTER XXIX.

LETHE'S GLOOM, BUT NOT ITS QUIET.

'But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
Than those that have more cunning to be strange.'

SHAKESPEARE.

WERE the wheels of life beginning to drag a little heavily in the thatched cottage in the barley field as the spring days went on?

If it were so, it could only be a very little, there was so much to be done, so much to be cared for. New interests went on increasing, as they always do when people are capable of being interested; and the old interests went on deepening and growing into the life of things to an extent that could only have been found if some stern fate had ordered that they should be suddenly torn up by the roots.

She was trying, as she stood there, still blushing deeply, to gather up and coil the rich thick shower of gold that the breeze was beginning to stir; but it was not easy. George Kirkoswald saw that her hands were tremulous, that she had to make effort.

'Let me help you,' he said, taking the heavy coil from her hands and twining it with gentle care.

He was looking at it, wondering at its beauty; he was not looking down the path, he was not observing a tall, stately figure coming toward them in a sweeping dress of dark-red silk.

Diana Richmond was observing him. She had plenty of time to do so as she came noiselessly over the soft turf.

It was Genevieve Bartholomew who saw her first. Genevieve was turning to thank George for the small service he had done. She saw at once that the doing of it had been witnessed by Miss Richmond.

The girl turned pale, very pale, as if the thing had been a crime; and a change came over the face of George as he moved onward by her side. They must meet Miss Richmond; they must pass quite close.

She was looking at them steadily. There was no smile on her face, no change; there was nothing that could be read or comprehended; at any rate, there was nothing that Genevieve could comprehend.

Miss Richmond came nearer, looking from under her half-closed eyes as she usually did look. Her mouth was lightly compressed, as it always was. She looked very beautiful, very majestic. She passed with a stately bow.

There was nothing more than that—a stately bow of recognition.

A sense of wonder was mingled with the relief that George Kirkoswald and Genevieve felt as they went back down the Gill. They went as they had come, quite silently.

All the way back they kept silence, back through the Eden of white wild-flowers and blossoming trees. There was a slight ascent just before they came to the gate that led out to the thymy bank where Noel Bartholomew sat sketching. The pathway was in the shade of some great trees whose trunks were covered with ancient ivy. George Kirkoswald stopped and took Genevieve's

It was not much that she had to tell, but she told it as if knowing that Genevieve might have more than one reason for being glad to hear it told.

'I can only guess who's behind it all,' she said, 'but let him be who he will, I hope he'll have his reward. I was about at t' far end wi' one thing an' another, an' Mr. Damer threatening to sell us up for t' rent if 'twasn't paid afore May-day. There's some influence somewhere, or he'd never ha' written the letter he has written to me, tellin' me 'at if a little more time 'ud be a convenience I can take it, without feelin' anyways anxious. Think o' that! an' as polite a letter as if it had been written to a duchess.'

'Then you can see your way now?' Genevieve asked.

There was a little darkening of Dorothy's face; poor face, it had grown so used to darkening!

'It'll all depend upon the harvest,' she said. 'One good old-fashioned harvest would set me on my feet again nicely. It all depends o' that.'

Genevieve could not help wondering, as she went away again, what effect this little improvement in Miss Craven's prospects would have upon the hopes of Ishmael Crudas. Still it was not to be expected that Mr. Kirkoswald—for his was the influence that had wrought upon Mr. Damer—this she knew, and Dorothy knew it too—it was not to be expected of him that he should refrain from helping Miss Craven to stand firm over a crisis, because there was a chance that if she should fail to stand she might be driven to a marriage to which she would not consent willingly. He might be sorry for Ishmael Crudas, but he was too chivalrous not to be more sorry still for a woman who was fighting the battle of life bravely, though the odds were so desperately against her. It was only a little thing that he had done, but Genevieve was glad that he had done it, glad and proud too, though she could take no credit to herself. George Kirkoswald had made a careless-seeming promise to her, and he had kept it carefully, but he would have done the same had the promise been made to any human being that breathed.

And then in the fulness of her heart, and in the lightness of spirit that comes when your foot is on the turf, she spoke aloud.

'He could never, never fail from his word!' she said.

She had only to wait a little, to wait in an untr tranquil rapture so keen, so unspeakable, as to lie on the very verge of pain. Perhaps it would be a little less keen, a little less tremulous after she had seen him again.

It could not be but that some sense of confusion, something that was near to shame, should mingle with her rapture. And this she bore ill, it was so new, so unprecedented in her mental life.

It was impossible as she sat there that she should not go back over the events of the day before. They had made the great grand crisis of her existence. The thing that had given life to her life could not happen twice over.

It had all happened in a moment as it were ; and so strangely—so very strangely ! No wonder that there should be an element of pain in the beauty and rapture of it.

Perhaps the most beautiful moment of all had been that moment when they had stood hand in hand in that Eden of pale wild-flowers and blossoming trees ; and when George had spoken her name in such tender, gentle tones. ‘Tell me why, Genevieve?’ he had asked. Certainly that was sweeter to remember than all else beside.

She did not linger upon the sudden shock that followed, clashing upon the nerve currents of her frame with such disastrous force. It had been a very natural and not uncommon occurrence, so her father had said. The earth had been loosened by the previous rains, and it had given way all about the overhanging rock. Such things were always happening in these ravines.

The rest was not all pleasant to remember. A hot blush dyed her face each time she recollected the unexpected appearance of Diana Richmond upon the scene. What could she think, since she had known nothing of the events of the few previous moments? It would be so difficult to make explanations to Miss Richmond.

‘But I will explain,’ the girl said to herself, ‘I will tell her all the truth, if I can, when I see her again.’

All that happened after was tinged with this confusion that had the effect of doubt and self-reproach. Surely that last word of hers, ‘I am yours always, I am yours till I die,’ had been spoken too soon, too readily. There had been no pleading, no effort

if perplexed by his own feeling. 'But Ah don't never rest when Ah'm ashore.'

'You do not? . . . Ah, that does seem strange! . . . But you will not forget me, Davy? And you shall have this,' Genevieve said, drawing a tiny book from her pocket, a much-worn copy of 'The Imitation.' 'You shall have this to make you think of me, and to remind you of that day when you were so nearly drowned. I have my little *Viking* to remind me of you. And I shall pray for you, and sometimes I shall sing a hymn that is a prayer for all that are in peril on the sea. . . . But I will not keep you any longer now. Your mother will want to have you all to herself to-night. Good-bye, Davy. You will come and see me when you come back again.'

There was no answer, but the wistful light-blue eyes filled with sudden tears as the little lad turned away, and Genevieve, standing by the stile watching him, felt a tear or two steal down her own face for very sympathy. She felt certain that the child had left something unsaid that he had wanted to say. Poor little fellow! The memory of him would always be interwoven with the other memories of that fearful day in Soulsgrif Bight. It was his mother's distress for him that had drawn Genevieve thither, and if she had never gone down to the Bight, how different life might have been, how colourless, how cold, how empty, how inconceivably unblest!

She still stood there, lost in a kind of reverie that often came over her now. The sun was turning the young leaves of a sycamore in the hedgerow to morsels of glowing, transparent amber; a man was ploughing in a brown field beyond; the sea-gulls and crows were boldly following him. A plover was crying across the upland, some lambs were bleating in a meadow across the lane. They were bleating rather piteously, Genevieve thought, but she did not understand the appeal. Presently she saw that one of the mother-ewes had got out through the hedge, and was running down the lane, crying as she went, then standing still and looking back, crying again, and finally hurrying to the hollow in the hedge silently. Over and over the anxious mother repeated all this, and then Genevieve, going out from the barley-field, saw that a tiny white lamb had been caught among the dense, prickly undergrowth

expenses should be a matter of extreme care. More than once she remembered little hints of foreboding that had dropped from her mother's lips.

The discovery that Bartholomew had just made would have startled his daughter more seriously than the falling of half the rocks in the neighbourhood. To put the matter briefly and plainly, he knew as he sat there brooding over the papers in his desk, and the book in his hand, that unless he made some special effort, the end of a very short time would find him penniless.

The word crossed his mind, bringing with it a sense of absurdity for the moment. The pictures that hung about his studio would, if they were finished, bring money enough for the needs of years.

They were not finished, but it seemed to him, as he sat looking at them, that nothing could be easier than to finish two of them within two months.

It seemed so easy a matter, and so plain, that he turned away with a smile ; and stirring his studio fire into a blaze, he sat there with his chill hands extended, thinking gratefully of the work he had done since he came to Netherbank. He had been dissatisfied with it, both with its quantity and its quality. But if it had not been done, what would have been his outlook now ? He hardly cared to think of that ; indeed, he hardly cared to think of the matter any more at all. Once he had decided what was to be done ; there was no need to harass himself uselessly.

He did not seem to harass himself. He was not conscious of brooding over his financial difficulties. But what was it that had suddenly come upon his too sensitive brain, pressing there like a band of iron, and seldom relaxing its dread pressure ? It was never relaxed entirely, save when he was out under the blue heavens where the wind from the sea could breathe upon his fevered forehead.

The blow had fallen just when he was most ill-prepared to bear such a blow. For weeks before he had been flagging, needing rest ; yet he had worked eagerly when the mood was upon him, using up the little nerve force he had at the moment instead of letting it accumulate awhile. He was still doing the same thing, or trying to do it, even though the new pressure on his brain made his own work seem hateful in his sight. It need hardly be said

breaking the silence that George did not seem disposed to break. Was that the form his great gladness was taking? Hers was taking the form of an unusual gaiety.

'I have many questions to ask,' he said, 'some of them important ones; but I shall not ask them now, since they need important answers, which I see I should not get in your present mood.'

'Then ask unimportant ones.'

Mr. Kirkoswald paused a moment.

'I cannot think of any unimportant thing that concerns you.'

'That is flattery.'

'Which you do not like; that I am aware of. Then let me see! What have you been doing while I have been away?'

'I have been doing many things. Amongst others I have practised the songs you asked me to practise.'

'Thank you. I have brought you some more, which I will bring down to-morrow, if I may.'

'We shall be glad to see you.'

'As glad as you were to-day?' asked George, in a tone of tenderer and deeper meaning; then, seeing Genevieve's quick hot blush, he hastened to add, 'That is unfair. But you would not mind my seeing that you were pleased if you knew all that it is to me. Think for a moment: there is no other person in the world to be glad—I mean not *very* glad, as a sister might be. My comings and goings have been of no account to anyone for so many years, I have had so little hope that anyone would ever take count of them, that it is more to me than I can tell you to find that my coming is really a little pleasure to you.'

'It was not a little pleasure, it was a great deal,' said the girl, speaking out of her simplicity, out of her strong pity for his lonely life. 'And, after all, I was not so happy while you were away—not so very happy as you think.'

'Then thank you, a thousand times thank you, for saying it! Every day has been as ten to me, and I travelled all night last night not to lose another day.'

They stood a little longer in the fading sunlight, and a few more words were said, unconsidered as words may be when faith is strong and understanding perfect. The difficult word was 'good-bye,' but it was spoken at last, and George Kirkoswald went

felt that she sang it with a better understanding than before—a finer feeling for its yearning and its pathos. She would sing it again to-morrow when George Kirkoswald came.

But the morrow came, and Genevieve did not sing *Robin Adair*. She did not open the piano at all. She wanted to listen, to listen for a footstep on the path through the springing barley.

All day she listened, hardly caring to go down to the studio lest she should miss one moment of reassurance. Then she blamed herself and went. 'What was she thinking? What was she fearing?' she asked herself in scorn. What did it matter, to-day, or to-morrow, this week or the next week? What did it matter that she should have to wait a little?

So she went on waiting, and the week went on to its close, quietly, but not painlessly. Her father's ceaseless questioning and wondering as to what could have become of Kirkoswald was enough for pain. Once he said he would go up to Usselby to make inquiries, but Genevieve dissuaded him from going to Usselby. Not for the world would she have him go there unless she knew that George was ill, and unable to come to Netherbank. Of course, she had distressed herself, thinking that he might be ill; but in that case he would have sent some note or message.

Every morning there had been new flowers in the little room; every morning new sunshine; every morning new hopes.

And every evening the sun had gone down; and every evening the flowers had drooped. Had the hopes drooped a little also?

Genevieve never admitted that they had. If her faith would not bear so slight a strain as this, then certainly some heavier strain would be laid upon it, so that it might grow to a stronger power of endurance.

the afternoon the two went out into the scattered parish, each going his own way. When the day's work was done, they sat together by the fire in the dining-room, a low, dark, unbeautiful room, that had neither ornament nor picture. The walls were painted stone-gray, the curtains were of the same shabby dark red as those in front of the house. There was no other colour that could be called by name.

They sat there as usual one evening—it was the evening of the day on which Mr. Kirkoswald had returned. The curtains had been drawn, two dim candles lighted, a cheerful fire burned in the grate, for it was yet chilly in the evenings, and the Canon bore ill the cold of the northern shire, to which he had never become acclimatized. He had always been a frail man, always sensitive to every physical, mental, and spiritual influence with which he had come in contact.

They had been silent awhile, rather a long while for the curate, the Canon thought, with a touch of amusement. Mr. Severne was not given to silences—rather did he prefer a gentle continuous stream of speech, breaking on this side into light-hearted boyish pleasantries, on that side into grave, earnest, and instant recognition of the purer and holier and more spiritual side of things. He could pass from one to the other so that seeing the mere look on his face, and in his eyes, you lost all sense of incongruity.

The Canon broke in upon his present thought, whatever it was, with an unwelcome question :

‘Have you read that article in the *Quixotic Review*, Severne—the one entitled “To Everything a Season”?’

‘No,’ said Mr. Severne, lifting his big blue-gray eyes deprecatingly, and blushing deeply ; ‘no—I—I haven’t seen it.’

‘What have you seen lately in the way of literature?’

The blush deepened, the confusion mounted and mounted till it reached its height ; then it toppled over into a laugh of the keenest amusement.

‘I don’t think I’ve seen anything for a long time,’ he said ; ‘I—I know I’m too bad, but one has such a lot of things to do, and—and——’

‘And as a matter of fact you don’t care for reading?’

Another laugh, with less amusement in it, another blush with

anticipated was that he should have to consent to a long engagement. Noel Bartholomew would not be anxious to part with his daughter. It seemed like a bitter cruelty to ask him to part with her at all. But George had his own plans for mitigating the cruelty. The painter might live where he chose to live, but he should always be made to feel that his real home was under his daughter's roof. A handsome studio was part of Kirkoswald's idea for the restoration of Usselby; and it was an intention that even Genevieve might not gainsay.

So George was thinking as he wandered back to his lonely breakfast. He had an intense dislike to lonely meals, and it had been growing upon him of late. Even the idea that they might soon be no longer lonely was not very comforting for the present hour. He was sorely needing someone to whom he might speak out of his full heart without reserve.

For one second he thought that his need was about to be met, but the next instant disclosed the fact that the man who was entering his grounds by the wicket-gate on the north wore the Richmond livery. He came forward, touched his hat respectfully, delivered a note to the master of Usselby, and retired.

Perhaps it would be more correct to say a letter than a note. The envelope was large, and appeared to be well filled. The address was in Miss Richmond's clear, firm, important-looking handwriting.

George Kirkoswald went indoors at once. His breakfast was ready, it was waiting for him in his study; but he hardly saw it. He sat down on a chair near the window and placed the unopened letter on a table before him.

It would perhaps hardly be an exaggeration to say that so far as the appearance of his face was an index, ten minutes had done the work of ten years.

He sat there, looking out beyond the letter to some far-away vacancy that his narrow room could not bound. His forehead was drawn into rugged lines, his dark eyes had sunk into deeper recesses, his firm mouth was compressed with something more than firmness.

He did not think as he sat there. For as long a time as was possible to him he purposely refrained from thinking.

possible. This new paper in the *Quixotic* had given new impetus to the Canon's wish.

'Listen to this, Severne,' said the Canon, while the curate hastened to put the candles so that the old man could see better. 'It is a passage out of the middle of the paper; the beginning is simply a prose poem.'

The Canon began, reading in a pure cultivated tone that would have made almost any article seem of value :

"Here, for instance, is Gurth—I know him quite well; he lives in the village below—Gurth, the born thrall, dumb, defaced, joyless, but pitiaibly patient, even in these hard times, when neither the day's work nor the day's wage is always to be had. His gait is heavy, but I fancy his heart is heavier still. 'Merrie England!' I doubt whether he ever so much as heard the phrase. Will his children hear it? How speaks Sir Henry Taylor?

"“Oh, England! “Merry England,” styled of yore!
Where is thy mirth? Thy jocund laughter where?
The sweat of labour on the brow of care
Makes a mute answer—driven from every door!"

"“The people actually seem to have forgotten how to amuse themselves,' says a recent writer, and, with Gurth visibly before us, we acknowledge it sadly; but more sadly still we acknowledge that Gurth's master has in nowise forgotten how to amuse himself. What does he ever do, but amuse himself in the most expensive and ornamental manner possible? Is he not acquainted with the Turf, and with Hurlingham? Has he not his opera-box, his yacht, his grouse moor, with perhaps other amusements less defensible than these? At the present moment there are two newspapers of recent date lying before me, and from one I learn that the rented grouse-shootings of Scotland, with the fishings, realize the enormous sum of £300,000 per annum. My other newspaper says, 'It is a fact not undeserving of serious attention, that in the past year the deaths of seventy-seven persons in the Metropolitan district were either due to starvation and exposure, or were at any rate accelerated by privation.'

"“I leave these two extracts side by side for the consideration of all whom they may concern. The social ill that weighs upon my

ways of thought, of a poetic appreciation of life and nature. Did he expect that Miss Richmond would be a helpmeet for him here? Was he anticipating that refined intellectual intercourse which he had declared in one of his published poems to be the only true basis for any bond of friendship or of love?

Others asked these questions before he began to ask them for himself. When they came he thrust them away; again and again he thrust them away, but again and again they claimed loudly to be heard.

He was enduring it all over again as he sat there with the unopened letter before him. The very handwriting seemed to bring back that first dawning dread, that first fear lest he should have mistaken the enthrallment of his senses for the strong, fine, spiritual bond that alone can bind two souls so that neither shall stumble in the dark ways of life for the need of that support that such bonds engage to give.

There had been a long period of suffering and dismay that he had not been able to understand at the time. It had succeeded, by somewhat quick gradations, to the first phase of wild and passionate admiration. Even now he barely comprehended it. Day after day for a whole year had been marked as it went past by pain, by negation, by unsatisfied yearnings. In his ignorance, in his infatuation, he had imagined that it was a fuller love for which he yearned, not knowing, not perceiving that Miss Richmond's feeling for him was not love at all; not dreaming that his devotion did but satisfy her vanity, and help a little to dull her craving for excitement. She professed to return his love, but her professions failed to content him. They were hollow and they were lifeless, and there came to be a hollowness and a lifelessness about all their intercourse that half maddened him for a time.

He had, of course, desired in the beginning that their marriage should take place as soon as it conveniently could, but the sudden and serious illness of Mrs. Richmond had caused delay. This was fatal. Subsequently, in a way that was curious to look back upon, the question of marriage had been allowed to subside. It had subsided by tacit, mutual consent. That was all that could be said. The engagement remained a fact, but the question of its fulfilment was consciously held in abeyance.

'That does make one want to do something,' said the young curate thoughtfully. 'But I wish the writer had told one more exactly what was to be done!'

'If you had read the article through, you would have found that the author does become more practical, much more. I have heard it said that every social reformer should have one leading idea. This man's idea is music; consequently it agrees with mine. I am certain we can do something—here at Thirkeld Abbas, if not down in the Bight. There is Mrs. Caton, and the two Miss Damers, and I think Genevieve—Miss Bartholomew—would come and help us.'

'I'm sure she would,' said Mr. Severne, brightening instantly, and blushing more instantly still. 'She would do anything to help anybody. Shall we go over to-morrow, and ask her?'

The Canon looked at him gravely, and rather sorrowfully. Should he utter any word of warning? Was it too soon? Was it too late? The old man had had hope in the beginning; but he had seen enough to turn his hope to fear—fear lest this son of his old age should be called upon to suffer more than he could well bear to see him suffering.

No word of warning was uttered; and next day being temptingly blue and beautiful, the Canon had no special objection to urge when Mr. Severne repeated his proposal that they should go over to Netherbank.

It was almost as much a pleasure to the Canon as it was to the younger man to drive through, between the primrose-banks, to the studio in the orchard, where the trees stood bossed all over with the small round crimson buds; to find when he got there a human being or two unaffectedly glad to see him, grateful to him for going; to know that he might talk, or be silent, or listen, or do aught he chose to do, and yet be sure of coming away refreshed and rested.

The tones of a piano, of Genevieve's voice, arrested them at the cottage door. Mr. Kirkoswald was there in the little room; he had brought down the songs he had promised to bring. Genevieve was trying them over.

'I trust I come as opportunely for you as for myself,' said Canon Gabriel, speaking with his beautiful old-fashioned courtesy of

hindered by events, another long, long period of doubt and pain and final disillusionment.

This was the end. There had been no other end.

There had been no quarrel. Once, after a long interval of absence and silence, George Kirkoswald had written a note to Miss Richmond. He had been for some two or three months in London, and no correspondence had passed, the previous intercourse between them having been of too cold and restricted a nature to make renewed correspondence seem needful or desirable. The engagement had not yet been broken, but it had worn down, fragment by fragment, until in his eyes it no longer existed.

George Kirkoswald was about to accompany two friends of his to Rome; his stay might be protracted, and before he went he had a very natural desire to feel himself perfectly free, to know that no further allegiance was expected from him. So it was that he wrote, briefly and courteously, to Miss Richmond, asking only one thing at her hands, that she would return his letters.

But Miss Richmond did not return his letters, nor did she make any reply to that last request.

From that day to this—an interval of some four years—nothing further had passed between Diana Richmond and Kirkoswald. It had so happened that they had not even met face to face until they had met in Birkrigg Gill, George Kirkoswald with Genevieve Bartholomew's golden hair in his hands.

Was it strange, then, that he should sit looking at this unopened letter with pain and dark dread graven on every feature of his face?

It was a noble face, even then, though there was written on it the knowledge of error and mistake, the consciousness that in that bygone day he had not been true to the higher light that was in him; how untrue he had been he only saw now that he sat there looking backward over the things that had been, with other eyes than his own, the eyes of the purer soul that was blending with his in its very highest aspirations.

'You mean to betray me?'

'Assuredly I mean to betray you. Canon Gabriel, this article was written by Mr. Kirkoswald himself. His brain is full of schemes for demoralizing the united parish of Thurkeld Abbas with Soulsgrif Bight.'

The Canon was silent for awhile.

'Then there is little left to be said by me,' he began presently. 'Instead of having to plead with you for others, Mr. Kirkoswald, I must plead for myself, that you will give me encouragement in this matter and enlightenment. You can do so much, since you have the experience that Severne has not, and apparently the enterprise that I never had.'

'Thank you. It is easy to be enterprising on paper,' replied Kirkoswald. 'But I need hardly say that I am anxious to do what I can. We will at present leave the question of a suitable room at Soulsgrif. I know a person who has grateful associations with Soulsgrif Bight; and who as a mere expression of his gratitude will see to the room,—with your permission, of course. Our question is what to do with it when we have got it?'

'There could hardly be any limit to the uses of such a room,' replied the Canon. 'The main plea in this paper is for music, and I am quite in accord with what you say. One thing struck me much—you give it as a quotation—it is the assertion that "not one person in each million of visitors to the Crystal Palace is charged with drunken and disorderly conduct!" Think of that—not one in a million! Until I read this article I did not dream of counting the Crystal Palace among the great influences that are working on national manners and character. Perhaps if one's eyes were opened, as they will one day be, one would have a reverence for that modern palace of glass and iron, well-nigh equal to the reverence one feels for the ancient stones of Westminster Abbey.'

Mr. Bartholomew had come into the room during this speech, but so gently as not to draw attention from it. He was looking gray and absent and weary. He had been at work; and he had begged his daughter not to interrupt him if visitors came.

'I did not know you were holding a levée, my dear!' he said, turning to Genevieve with a smile in his eyes.

that has such faith in your chivalrous sense of honour. I heard a gentleman saying only the other day that if any man could be said to "wear the white flower of a blameless life" that man was George Kirkoswald. To this gentleman I shall turn for the help that I shall need if you drive me to seek for redress.'

There was more than this, much more, but it was all to the same specious purpose. Reproaches, threatenings, were mingled with distorted facts, while other facts were utterly ignored.

The difficult thing was to find a motive for all this evil will, this most evident desire to work mischief and misery.

Not for one moment did George Kirkoswald deceive himself, or pain himself by fearing that any grain of unrequited love had remained in that ungenial soil to spring up and bear such bitter fruit as this.

If there was no love, then neither could there be jealousy, so he argued, forgetting that there is another jealousy—

"Dead love's harsh heir, jealous pride ;"

forgetting, too, that a nature like Diana Richmond's, full of all contradictory passions and thoughts and emotions, was not a nature to be judged by any ordinary ways of judgment.

He could not find any motive that seemed to him strong enough, but he came near to finding one when he remembered the conflict that had always existed in her by reason of her unoccupied life, and the intensity of her ceaseless demand that life should not only be interesting, but that it should be dramatically interesting ; and the demand included insistently that the interest should centre in herself.

Once—it was when he had first discovered for himself the existence of this conflict—he had asked her why it was that she should choose to remain always, or nearly always, on a bleak Yorkshire upland ; when she might, now and then at least, find interest and occupation in foreign travel. Her reply had amazed him.

'I have no wish to travel,' Miss Richmond had said ; 'I have never had any wish to see any foreign country, or any foreign person. The mere idea is distasteful to me. I have no interest whatever in anything out of England. You say I can choose. I cannot. If I could I would live in London. I would never leave

where, George Kirkoswald thought, as he walked about his shabby rooms at Usselby Hall. He was glad that Genevieve was not there to see them in this fresh, lucent sunshine. It seemed to him that there was an absolute squalor about the place, inclining him toward a new sympathy with wretchedness and misery. 'If I lived here long with things in this state I should deteriorate,' he said to himself, as he stood watching the early morning sun as it crept across the walls and floor of his dingy library.

But he was not intending to live long with things in this state. Once let that word be spoken that he had to speak, once let that answer be given that he dared to hope would be given, and change should follow speedily.

He had not decided with much detail upon the kind of change, details should be left to another decision than his. He was aware that he would be on one side, the side of beauty for beauty's sake, regardless of higher or lower considerations; while Genevieve would be on the other side, the side of a wise renunciation. She would make concessions to him, as she had made concessions to her father, this he knew, but there should be no pressure. In her father's case the pressure had come from her own perception of his inability to work, to think, to live his own life, in the midst of mean and unbeautiful surroundings. When Genevieve was quite a child he had declared that it was necessary to his sense of artistic consistency that his little daughter should be dressed in a manner suited to her own rare beauty, and her dress had always been a matter of more or less interest to him. When he had been commended for his painting of draperies he had frequently asserted that he owed such skill as he had to his daughter's ability to wear her garments gracefully. All this had been before he had suffered; and suffering had wrought changes; but Genevieve was aware that his surroundings were still a matter of importance to him. Therefore it was that she had felt herself justified in doing things that were as congenial to her nature as they were doubtful to her higher judgment.

All this George Kirkoswald knew, and understood and appreciated. He knew, too, that although there had been compromise, there had been no reconciliation; only a continuous dread of reconcilement to a lower ideal.

honour, and finds himself enmeshed in circumstance that gives colour to accusations of dishonour.

As Diana Richmond knew only too well, the possession of a stainless name was to George Kirkoswald above all other possessions. His over-scrupulousness had served her for an amusement; his antiquated views had been burdensome when they had been comprehensible. It was this knowledge that had enabled her to strike with so sure an aim; this insight that made her feel so secure in the position she had taken.

Let him do what he would he could not act, as doubtless he would have done if that letter of hers had never been written.

It is possible that even Miss Richmond might have been satisfied if she could have sounded the full depth of the anguish she had wrought—satisfied, but not touched. No sight of another's sorrow could rouse her to sympathy with that sorrow. That he had found long ago. Anything like a persistent claim upon her sympathy seemed to harden her nature utterly against the person who preferred the claim, and as a rule the hardness resolved itself into anger and annoyance.

It was this knowledge that each had of the other that lent so keen an emphasis to that written page.

More than once during the day George Kirkoswald had risen to his feet and paced the room in a very passion of rebellion against the torture he was undergoing. No note of resignation had been struck within him yet. The first effect of the sudden and strong disappointment had been bewilderment. To this succeeded anger, resentment, a wild desire to meet defiance with defiance.

Why should he not tear that letter into a thousand shreds, go down to Netherbank on the next morning, and act and speak there as he would most certainly have acted and spoken had he not received it?

This was the one strong inclination that he had. Later there came a day when he wished with all his might that he had acted upon his inclination.

Had he known less of Diana Richmond, had he been less strongly persuaded of her infinite cruelty, he had doubtless done this thing that he desired to do. As it was, he was overcome of the persuasion.

Genevieve Bartholomew on the sands to the north of Soulsgrif Bight.

'Why did you not leave me a message?' he asked with a little tender reproach as they walked up and down where the wavelets were splashing faintly upon the onyx-tinted beach. The sun was sparkling in the water-pools, great dark shadows lay upon the wrack-fringed boulders under the cliffs. Bartholomew was making a little sketch of a fishing-boat that was standing out to sea, a perfect study of colour, with its russet and ochre sails and its rich brown hull. There were sparkling touches of white here and there; the blue jerseys of the fishermen made effective contrast. The sketch was only the work of a few minutes, but it was a gem of freshness and clear, swift handling.

'And now I must make haste,' the artist said, packing up his tools. 'We were going round by the Ness, Genevieve and I,' he added to Kirkoswald, 'and up into Birkrigg Gill. You will come with us?'

'That is kind of you,' said Kirkoswald.

'Were you waiting for the invitation?'

'That is unkind, and a little hard to bear. I do assure you I keep a conscience, and it has pricked hard at times.'

'May it never have less to reproach you with,' said Bartholomew heartily. More and more he was assured that his first impression of Kirkoswald had been a true one—that it had failed only on the side of inadequate appreciation. He could not but admire the strength that he had never had himself, the quick clear vitality that was the outcome of that strength, and seemed to make all life, the social life, the life of thought, the life of work, so easy, so painless, so natural. He was already beginning to feel that he might some day come to lean on this man as a father leans on the son who has gone beyond himself, and stands on a higher plane in men's estimate. The feeling had comfort in it when he thought of his future, more comfort still when he thought of the future of his daughter.

They had left the sea-shore now and were making their way up the noisy rippling beck to the upper part of the Gill. Mr. Bartholomew was going out on the other side to the place where he had sat on the day when Cecil Richmond had joined him. He

there had been something which had rendered the confession of a previous engagement to Diana Richmond all but impossible. He would use none of these ways of extenuation. His tale should be told with all severity of speech as if an enemy told it.

If it were possible to him to tell it at all, he could tell it best in this manner, but was it possible? Could he compel himself to go down and confess these things to Genevieve, and to her father, with the open candour that circumstance required? Would not such candour seem almost brutal in its ruthlessness?

The ruthlessness of it would lie in the fact that he could see no alleviation to the strange sorrow that he had brought upon one so entirely innocent, so guileless, so unsuspecting of evil. He might be able to bear the worst himself, but could he ask her to bear it with him?

That she would consent to brave anything, he did not doubt, supposing that she had first decided to accept the offer of a man dishonoured to all seeming by a broken promise, but he knew that her consent would be given in ignorance. How could she know what the worst might mean? How could she have prevision of the agony of slander, and shame, and humiliation, that would come into her fair beautiful life, and so mar it that it would never be the same life again? It must be his prevision that must spare her, if indeed she might be spared. It seemed to him that he had but this to consider—how he could spare Genevieve Bartholomew's name from the breath of slander and detraction.

The future that had lain before him in the morning, as the landscape below him had lain with its green pastures and its still waters smiling in the spring sunshine, had changed even as the scene had changed. Where all had been light, and pleasantness, and songs of birds, and myriad flowers, there was darkness and obscurity, with no visible pathway through the overshadowed land. It had been morning, now it was night, night with him, even in his very soul.

Was the starry silence entering into that inner night? He was conscious of change at last, conscious of the fact that he was bearing trouble, and bearing it not well.

There was stillness all about him, and there came a stillness upon his spirit, making it possible for him to uplift his downcast

way. Giant primroses were nestling in corners among the deep undergrowth; fragile wood-anemones were looking up with the touch of wistfulness that they always seem to have. A little reed-sparrow was twittering and singing on a spray; there was a wood-lark on the top of a hawthorn-tree; a thrush was singing his bridal song; far away, up among the hills, the cuckoo was calling, calling, never weary of calling to the spring.

They walked on hand-in-hand, and silently, these two—on through the Eden of white wild-flowers and blossoming trees.

Why should it not be silently? The question did not form itself in the brain of either, but it was there unformed, and vaguely influencing to silence. Everything moved to that—to utter stillness, utter rest, utter peace.

In moments of supremest emotion words are always inadequate, and being inadequate, they jar and detract. The highest feeling demands that we leave it unexpressed.

It was enough for Genevieve that her hand was in George Kirkoswald's, that he held it there as one who had a right to hold it for ever. There was a strength, a completeness in his grasp that was of itself a sufficient promise.

Promise! She would have scorned herself had any thought within her demanded a spoken promise of him.

And as for George Kirkoswald, he, too, would have known self-scorn if, with that small hand lying confidingly in his, he could have had a doubt, a dread, a feeling of uncertainty.

The rocks on either hand were higher and more rugged as they went on. The hanging greenery was flung about more luxuriantly; the undergrowth was deeper and more tangled. Yet still the primroses and the wood-anemones clustered among the grass; still the cherry and the wild apple-trees were there. Aloft, growing out of a great moss-grown boulder that was cleft almost in twain, was a silver birch swinging its feathery boughs in the air.

They stood awhile, wondering how the bare riven rock could nourish so graceful and grateful a thing. There was a tiny streamlet trickling down by the side of it, making the ground moist enough for the water-buttercup to grow. It was a quite silent little stream. The only sound to be heard was the twittering

At the first glance at the artist's face, Kirkoswald had seen for himself that Noel Bartholomew was yet unaware of the words that had been spoken in Birkrigg Gill. He hardly knew whether he were, or were not, disappointed. Had Bartholomew asked but one question, that question had elicited all that was weighing so heavily on George Kirkoswald's heart and brain. He had prepared himself to speak if this opportunity were given. If it were not given, he would not force it—not at least until he could see the next step beyond.

He knew, only too sadly, that silence would inevitably lead to misconstruction, misjudgment; but till the truth could be made plain he must endure to be misjudged.

Even yet, he saw nothing definite before him. There had been no change without or within since the night when he had stood under the stars, and had waited, simply waited, till the shadows of the night had risen slowly from the horizon, leaving the rose-red glow upon the morning sea.

The influence of that hour was still upon him, subduing his impatience, controlling his too eager desires, modifying the too strong spirit of rebellion that still stirred within him at times. The feeling that his duty was to wait, his task to possess his soul in patience, was deepening to a conviction.

The one thing above all others that would tax and strain his patience was the knowledge that it could not be understood; and if it were not understood, suffering would be inevitable, not for himself—he was not thinking of himself now, but of Genevieve. Any sign that the suffering had begun to fall upon her would have taxed his resolution severely, but no such sign was given for him to read. There was a little natural confusion, a change of colour, a swift flash of recollection in her glance, but nothing more than this: both father and daughter had received him with the simple courteous warmth that had marked his reception at the cottage from the beginning.

'You will be expected to give an account of yourself,' said Noel Bartholomew, taking up his brushes again and turning to his easel. 'I should have been prepared to hear something serious if it had not been for Genevieve. I wanted to come to look after you, but she wouldn't let me.'

boulder was lying, with the silver birch, right across the path.

All manner of things had fallen, dragged downward with the rock and with the tree. A great briar had caught Genevieve's hat, swept it from her head: it was lying crushed under the mass of stone. All the shower of her yellow silken hair was about her as she lay unconsciously with her head on George Kirkoswald's shoulder, his arm supporting her, his first kiss upon her lips.

'Genevieve, Genevieve, my darling!' he said hoarsely, passionately. 'My child, speak to me!'

He was as pale as the girl herself. Could any piece of falling stone have touched her, that she should lie there so stirless, so lifeless, so pallid, so strange?

He stroked the long rippling silken hair; he put the small pale hand to his warm lips; he called again, and yet again, 'Genevieve, Genevieve, my child, speak to me!'

There was no answer, no sound save the chirp of the little reed-sparrow, twittering in the fallen birch.

George Kirkoswald went on uttering his distress, his anguish, in broken words, in passionate cries; it seemed impossible that she should lie there with the spring sunshine turning her yellow hair to glittering gold, with birds chirping all about, with pink-white blossoms fluttering down over her dress, with the white wood-sorrel and the blue speedwell at her feet—it seemed impossible in the midst of all this life that this most living of created beings should not have life enough left to hear life's most thrilling and precious words.

'Genevieve, Genevieve, my child, speak one word; if you love me speak one word!'

Only a few minutes had passed, a very few, yet it seemed as if an hour had gone by when the first pale pink tint was discernible on the white lip and cheek. Then the wondering eyes unclosed. Fuller consciousness brought the quick deep blush of maiden shame, for which there seemed to be a thousand reasons.

'Tell me first that you are not hurt in any way?' said Kirkoswald with concern.

'I am not hurt at all,' Genevieve replied; 'and it was cowardly to be so much startled.'

Genevieve exclaimed, forgetting all in unconcealed delight. 'Are things so far advanced as that?'

'Light is dawning upon me,' said Bartholomew. 'I do not wonder that we should have seen so little of you. Who is your architect?'

'A man at York—a Mr. Bush.'

'You have been there?'

'Yes, I was there three days—the last three days of the past week.'

'And the ground has been bought, the builder chosen, the plans drawn and accepted, and a ceremony arranged for laying the foundation-stone? Canon Gabriel did well to compliment you on your energy.'

'I am glad to have something on which to expend my energy,' said Kirkoswald.

'You find yourself possessed of a superfluity?'

'It will seem like boasting if I say "yes," nevertheless it is the truth at present. I have heard of people who could, by means of physical exhaustion, arrive at a most desirable and blissful state of mental hebetude. It is not easy.'

'You have been making the experiment?'

'I am still making it. That is one of my reasons for consenting to the Canon's plea that there should be a kind of ceremony, so that he might make a semi-public day of it. It seems that he has been wishing for such a day for a long time. He wants to see the people of the neighbourhood about him once again; he has reasons, so he says. There is to be luncheon at the Rectory.'

'And who is to lay the stone?' Genevieve asked, looking up from the piece of pale-green satin that she was embroidering. The light above her seemed to throw the child-like curves of her mouth and chin into exquisite relief; and her face was full of the simple, beautiful, tender regret that was overcoming her perplexity—regret for the passing shadow that would so surely pass.

There was no sign that it was passing now on the face of George Kirkoswald. Genevieve's very natural question had developed another phase of the incomprehensible change in him and his manner. Something that was almost a frown had suddenly darkened his forehead, and the lines about his mouth were com-

hand in his again. It was trembling still, and his own was less steady than usual.

'You will say one word to me, my child?' he asked in a low, pleading tone. 'Just one word—say that you are mine!'

Genevieve lifted her face to his frankly, readily, yet with a beautiful solemnness dawning there.

'I am yours always,' she said; 'I am yours till I die.'

And still the reed-sparrow went on twittering in the bough; still the cuckoo went on calling in the distance, calling, calling, never weary of calling to the spring.

CHAPTER XXXII.

WAITING.

'And sometimes I am hopeful as the spring,
And up my fluttering heart is borne aloft,
As high and gladsome as the lark at sunrise;
And then, as though the fowler's shaft had pierced it,
It comes plumb down with such a dead, dead fall.'

Philip Van Artevelde.

WAITING, when there is no doubt, no suspense, is often a very happy attitude of mind. The mere fact that there is something worth waiting for precludes all idea of dulness, or heaviness, or emptiness of life.

Genevieve sat in the little coral-tinted room; she had arranged it all with her own hands that morning, turning her plants to the sun, and giving them water. Then she had gone out to the hedge-rows down the fields, and had brought in all manner of beautiful wild things to deck the place. Long trailing sprays of greenery hung down from the brackets, and quivered in the breeze from the open windows. The canary chirped in his cage; the pigeons perched upon the window-sill, and plumed themselves in the morning sun.

All the forenoon Genevieve waited. It was Tuesday, the day after the landslip in Birkrigg Gill. George Kirkoswald was so sure to come that Genevieve never said to herself she was sure.

kind of pause that the others felt, and they felt also the effort that was in his question.

'Is that Yarrell Croft that you are painting?' he asked, as if unable to believe the thing he saw.

Bartholomew smiled.

'You are not complimentary to-day,' he replied. 'Certainly it is meant for Yarrell Croft. Shall I need to label it?'

'That will depend upon its destination, I should say. Pardon me, but what made you choose to paint such a place? Is it considered to be picturesque?'

Again the quiet smile quivered under Bartholomew's moustache. He felt a sense of success in that he had aroused his visitor's interest at last.

'Yarrell Croft is not picturesque—not, at least, in my estimation,' he said, 'and I did not choose to paint it. I was asked to do so.'

'It is a commission?'

'Yes, it is a commission.'

There was a certain emphasis in the deliberateness with which Kirkoswald turned from the easel and walked to the window that looked out over the Marishes. He stood there some time. Matters had been complicated before. Had he unwittingly stumbled across a new complication?

Bartholomew also had his thoughts.

'I hardly know why I need trouble myself to mention the fact,' he said, as Kirkoswald came back again, 'but it was not Miss Richmond who asked me to paint the picture; it was her brother. He asked me to paint two views of the place, this and a view of the old gateway in the garden.'

'In obedience to the commands of his sister, doubtless?'

'I believe not; indeed, I may say that I have reasons for knowing that it was not so. Miss Richmond was in London at the time, and, besides, there was an unmistakable air of unpremeditatedness about the request.'

'I am glad to hear it,' said Kirkoswald, with as little gladness in his tone as a man might have.

More than ever Genevieve was puzzled. It was quite within the range of things that George Kirkoswald should take an interest

needed to win from her a confession of love. She had yielded at once, without one moment of reservation. This was not well, it was not well. Even the child-heroine of 'The Swan's Nest' had known that things should not be thus.

'The *third* time, I may bend
From my pride and answer,—Pardon—
If he comes to take my love.'

So the morning passed, and so the afternoon passed. When the evening came there was a little wonder, a little quietness. Noel Bartholomew had been at work in his studio all day, but it had not been a successful day; and at the last moment, in a fit of disgust, he had painted out the work of many days, knowing as he did it that he would afterward repent.

Once, only a week or so before the landslip, he had made a discovery that had caused him to sit in his studio for nearly two hours without moving.

It has already been intimated that Bartholomew was not a provident man; and the manner of his life had not been of a nature to encourage providence. Almost all that he knew about his own affairs was that he had always had enough for his own needs and the needs of those about him.

Before leaving London, before deciding to give up his house, and sell the larger part of his household goods, he had been compelled to face the fact that his three years of inactivity had told upon his resources. All the time he had been living exactly as he had lived when his productive powers were greatest. There had been a certain slight unpleasant shock, a determination to retrench, and finally a conviction that retrenchment was not possible in the neighbourhood of Kensington. So it will be seen that he had a double motive for choosing to retire to Murk-Marishes for a time, and for endeavouring to settle down there on a system of living that should cause him as little anxiety as possible.

Of all this Genevieve had known nothing certainly; but she had guessed enough to make her mindful of the money which she had to expend herself, either on dress or for household needs. In point of fact her dress had cost her nothing since she left London; and she intended that for some time to come her personal

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE BELLS RING LOUD WITH GLADSOME POWER.

'I could not choose but love her. I was born to poet uses,
To love all things set above me, all of good and all of fair.'
MRS. BROWNING: *Lady Geraldine's Courtship*.

THE church at Thirkeld Abbas being dedicated to St. Peter, and St. Peter's Day being in June, it was very natural that Canon Gabriel should choose that day for the small inaugural festivities that he had desired to have, and the Canon's lightest wish was law to George Kirkoswald. There was to be a service to begin the morning with, that was why the bells were ringing so gaily up in the tower.

The little town was all alive by ten o'clock, flags were streaming across the street in the hot summer sunshine; children in gay holiday garments, with faces fresh as apple-blossom, were running all about the place. Carriages were coming in from the country, disappearing under the wide archway at the Richmond Arms. Some of the gigs went down to the Brown Cow. The gig-people looked quite as happy as the carriage-people, and they were much merrier, if that meant anything.

When the service was over, the people all went down together into Soulsgrif Bight. It was only a short distance, it seemed too short to some who hardly knew what it was to be out of doors on the morning of such a glad, glorious day as this. All the way by the roadside the pale wild roses were clustering in the green hedgerows, the woodbine swayed with the rose-sprays against the sunny blue beyond. The tall grasses in the cliff-top meadows surged to the light breeze, the lark sung overhead, away out of sight—

'Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not.'

Naturally the broad stream of people that came out from the church had separated into little groups. The Canon was passing

that his suffering under these circumstances was very great, yet he bore it patiently, and in silence.

Still it was not to be expected that he could pass through such an experience as this without arousing some suspicion in the mind of one who watched him so closely as his daughter watched him. She was conscious of some new element in his suffering; and the new element seemed more than ever patent on this bright May afternoon, when he came up from the studio to the little sitting-room where Genevieve was waiting. He had just painted out the beautiful and highly wrought background which he had put to the *Sir Galahad*; and even as the brush had swept over the canvas repentance had touched him. But it was too late; the undertints had only been half dry, and the confusion was hopeless.

In the morning Genevieve had looked forward to this one hour of the afternoon. *George Kirkoswald would be there when her father came up from his work; and it would be then that George would speak, that he would say how much more had happened in Birkrigg Gill than the fall of a piece of rock.* Genevieve had hesitated to speak of all that had passed herself. How could she speak of it? How should she say the words? She had thought of it, tried to think how she might bring herself to speak; but her thought had ended in passionate tears for the dead, loving mother to whom it would have been so easy to speak, and so natural.

But George had not come. Some unexpected thing had detained him, doubtless; and she must go out of doors with her father now. He was restless, nervous.

'I must go down to the sea this evening, dear,' he said. 'Nothing will give me any strength or any calmness but the sea.'

Genevieve was careful to leave a message this time, but it was left in vain.

It was quite in vain, too, that she watched with eager eyes the road that led down between the rocks into Soulsgrif Bight. No strong tall figure came dashing down with a tender reproach on his lips this evening.

And the next day was as that day had been, only a little quieter. 'It will be my turn to utter reproaches,' Genevieve said to herself as she sat down to sing over again the songs she had been asked to sing so often. One of these was *Robin Adair*, and Genevieve

dainty white dress when George came up, and at the first glance she saw that though there was still a sadness in his face, it was not the same sadness that had been there before. There was no bitterness in it; it could not be that bitterness, which is almost always littleness, should stay long in a nature like his. He shook hands, holding Genevieve's hand in his lingeringly, and he uttered his greeting in the warm, quiet, emphatic way that she had loved in him from the beginning—it made the mere fact of meeting him something to be remembered. The girl's heart bounded as he spoke, and fear departed swiftly. It was going to be a good day, then, after all! It was only now that she knew how little she had hoped.

'You will have seen Canon Gabriel,' George was saying, speaking more especially to Mr. Bartholomew; 'and I dare say you know more than I know. No? Well, I suppose there is to be a brief service of some kind down in the Bight, merely a sort of dedication of the place to good uses. Then we are to come back again and have luncheon at the Rectory. After that there is to be tea in the schoolroom at Thurkeld Abbas for the children and their friends. . . . I should advise you not to stay for the tea,' he added in a lower tone, and turning to Genevieve. 'It will make the day too long, too fatiguing for you.'

Genevieve only answered by a quick change of colour, and drooping eyelids. She was not quite sure that there was not some danger of tears. It was all so unexpected, the protecting authoritative tone that was associated with the first words of his that she had ever heard, the glance that was so full of unspeakable meanings, the manner that was all deference, all tender regard for her, for her happiness, her comfort. Had she, then, doubted, after all? . . . No; it was not that, it was not doubt; but all the same this new certainty was sweet; and being un hoped for at that moment, it was doubly precious.

For Genevieve, as for some others, the top of Soulsgrif Bank was reached all too quickly. The people were stirring down in the Bight; and flags were flying there also—bunting is always forthcoming along the coast. Two or three fishing vessels in the bay, lying at anchor, were decorated from stem to stern. When the Canon came in sight at the top of the bank, with his surplice

CHAPTER XXXIII.

RETROSPECT.

'But had you—oh, with the same perfect brow,
And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,
And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird
The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare—
Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind I
Some women do so.'

R. BROWNING.

It need hardly be said that for George Kirkoswald also the scene in Birkrigg Gill had repeated itself many times.

All the night that followed upon that eventful day it seemed to him that he was passing from an extreme of agony to an extreme of bliss. If he slept he held a lifeless form that kept silence, though he cried his most passionate cry. When he awoke life came back to the dead, pale lips, and they parted, saying with a sweet solemnity, 'I am yours, I am yours always till I die.'

He was glad when the morning came. He rose early, as he always did, and went out into the fir-copse, where the sun was slanting upward from the sea. He was glad, and the morning air was glad, and the birds that sang in the branches were glad.

This thing that was in all his thoughts had not happened as he had always meant it to happen. There had not been the unburdening of his mind that he had intended there should be. Genevieve had been too much unstrung to listen to him then, even if the presence of Miss Richmond in the Gill had not put an end to the opportunity.

He had acted on an impulse when he had asked for a word of promise in that unlikely moment; but he was glad now that he had asked, glad to the last fibre of his being. The promise had been given, and nothing could destroy the happiness that had entered into him by the gift.

The few hours that must elapse before he could present himself at Netherbank seemed like so many days. There was not that patience in his waiting that there had been in the waiting of Genevieve.

It was not that he had any dread now. The worst thing he

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CONCERNING CHARITY.

'Twas well we met once more ; now we must part.
 I think we had the chief of all love's joys
 Only in knowing that we loved each other.'

The Spanish Gipsy.

PERHAPS every one of that little foremost group, except Genevieve, had noticed the change on George Kirkoswald's face. Genevieve had turned aside to speak to Ailsie Drewe, who had a message to give from Davy. There was a tear on the woman's cheek. She grieved for the absence of her little lad on such a day as this.

Looking up, Genevieve saw the carriage, and recognised its occupants. It had stopped in the shade of the tall cliff. Miss Richmond was leaning back, holding her parasol daintily. Cecil was looking round.

The people were all streaming toward the heaps of building material that were lying about on the rocky plateau under the cliffs. Mr. Smartt, the builder, was making explanations. The room was to be a long L-shaped room. The main portion was to be a music-room, which could also be used as a schoolroom, lecture-room, or reading-room, as occasion demanded. The transept, if it might be so termed, was to be shut off by an oak screen. And, if the Archbishop permitted, it was to be used as a mission-room. The Canon had written to his Grace of York, but this matter was not yet settled. On the southern side there was to be a tiny cottage, to be occupied by someone likely to be of use in the place. This was nearly all that could be definitely pointed out to the admiring and wondering people. They were told that the stone-mullioned window to the north was to be filled with stained glass ; and that the glass was to have an inscription on it, but Mr. Smartt did not know what the inscription was to be. He believed that it would pertain to some event that had happened in Mr. Kirkoswald's family. That was all that he had to tell.

The memorial-stone was to be placed over this particular seaward-looking window. It was a large round-topped tablet :

It never occurred to him to say to himself, 'I will learn the worst at once ; even the worst may not be so bad as I fear.'

Nothing occurred to him that had any gleam of hope in it. When he could begin to look about for hope the worst would be over ; and it had not burst upon him in all its strength yet. This he knew, but he was not trying to prepare himself.

The first sign of returning vitality was a desire to look fully into the nature of his past mistake, the one great mistake of his life.

He must face the consequence ; but before he could decide how best to face it he had a great wish to see clearly the extent of his wrong-doing.

He had seen it before, but now that he was farther away from it he thought he could see it under an altered light. Things would seem different, and differently seen they might be differently judged.

Some who had known of his mistake had made excuse for him by saying that he was little more than a boy when he made it. This was an error. Kirkoswald had been twenty-seven years of age when he had yielded to the strange, wild, intoxicating passion that Diana Richmond had inspired in him.

It had come upon him with a suddenness, an absoluteness that seemed to turn the whole current of his being aside from its true course. He had used no judgment, nor desired to use any.

He had had no acquaintance whatever with Miss Richmond in his boyish days, though they had been neighbours, so to speak, and of the same age within a year or two, Miss Richmond having the advantage. Kirkoswald had been educated mainly abroad, and even while he was at Oxford he had seldom spent his vacations at Usselby.

Soon after taking his degree he had gone abroad again, and had remained there till the summer of his twenty-seventh year. Three weeks after his return his engagement to Miss Richmond had been proclaimed with a curious haste and publicity. Half the Riding wondered over the unlikely match.

Of course it could be understood. Miss Richmond's marvellous beauty, and her still more marvellous powers of fascination, were acknowledged everywhere. But then everywhere also it was acknowledged that Kirkoswald was a man of wide culture, of scholarly

mountains, would count for nothing if he had not love. "If I have not love I am nothing." That is his own expression.'

There was a little rustling now on the edge of the crowd, and, as it grew louder, the Canon waited. He could not but see the cause of it all. Kirkoswald saw it too, though he had stood with bowed head, and eyes downcast under his dark brooding forehead. It was as if he felt Miss Richmond coming sweeping toward the place where they stood; her brother by her side, her cream-coloured dress with all its fringes and ribbons of dark gold silk quivering and fluttering as she moved. She was exquisitely dressed. Her bonnet was of the same colours, ivory-white and dark shining gold. Her gloves, her parasol, her fan, had all been chosen to match. Perhaps she had never looked more beautiful, more touchingly fascinating than she did as she stood there among the fisher-folk of Soulsgrif Bight, listening with downcast eyes and serious face to the words that were falling from the lips of the fragile-looking old man who was speaking so directly from his heart.

He went on again as soon as he perceived that the people were waiting.

'I have not much more to say,' he began. 'We were speaking of love, the love that envieth not, that vaunteth not itself, that is not puffed up, that doth not behave itself unseemly, *that seeketh not its own*. Ah, if we would think of that awhile!—the beauty of a human life that was not seeking anything for itself, that was seeking always to add something to some other life—some peace, some happiness, some freedom from care and pain, some consolation in time of trial, some sympathy when all the outer world was dark and full of gloom. What a crown the angels would see always on the forehead of the man or woman who lived so! It could hardly be necessary to say that such a one would be not easily provoked, would be able to bear all things, endure all things, would believe all things, hope all things, would rejoice only in the right, the pure, the for-ever true.

'I have purposely left to the last one of the most magnificent clauses of St. Paul's description of charity—he declares that it "thinketh no evil." I prefer the newer reading, "*taketh not account of evil*." To what a height a man must have risen before

When at last he ceased to demand more from Miss Richmond's affection than she had to give, he found to his bitter cost that there was little else he might demand. Large as his nature was, and wide his acquirement, he failed to interest her unless he sought to do so through her vanity. In no other way could he touch her to any quickness of response, save by compliment, and the use of varied skill in flattery. No literature, no art, no science, no philosophy, could arouse her to desire to share for an hour in the intellectual life that was to him above all other life. He strove manfully enough to turn the current of such mental power as she had, believing all the while that the power was there if it could only be awakened, arrested, fixed on any sufficient and worthy ideas. But the sole result was an ever-increasing disappointment, an ever-growing strain and tension, a never-ceasing dread of a life of jarring and fretfulness, such as could not fail to be if he were for ever to go on desiring to live the higher life by the side of a woman whose higher nature seemed dead within her, so dead that even love had failed to evoke one sign of intellectual vitality, of spiritual susceptibility.

Strong as George Kirkoswald was, his strength did not enable him to bear this strain with impunity. His health failed, and depression came upon him. He was relieved, though ashamed of his relief to the very core of him, when a medical friend in London all but insisted that he should not spend the winter of that year in England.

He was surprised when the moment of parting came. Diana Richmond was all tenderness, and her manner full of vague repentance and regret. He would have changed his plans, even at the last, if his word had not been given to his friend somewhat solemnly.

A still greater surprise was in store for him. He was not prepared for the long and passionately-worded letters that came to him so frequently and regularly from the Yorkshire hills. They awoke all the old passion in him. Had he been a fool? he asked himself; had he been blind? or was it simply that he had been *exigeant*, and unreasonable in his expectations?

He came back again. The old experience awaited him. There was another brief season of delirium, another chance of marriage

‘What am I to say for *myself*?’ the old man said, having a desire to be courteous as well as truthful.

‘Say that you forgot me.’

‘But that would not be true. I did not forget you. I thought of you more than once.’

‘Ah, that sounds terrible! But go on, please; let me know the worst.’

‘The worst is that I invite you—and of course Mr. Richmond—to go back with us now to luncheon, if you will be so kind.’

The invitation was accepted, a little perhaps to the Canon’s surprise, and certainly to his regret. Kirkoswald, hearing of it, felt that an end had been put to any prospect of enjoyment the day might have had for him. There would be nothing but dread now, and a momentary expectation of some *coup de théâtre*, such as Miss Richmond would so well know how to accomplish on such an occasion as this.

Genevieve had declined Miss Richmond’s invitation to accept a seat in the carriage, and Cecil was told to signal to the coachman to drive back up the cliff before them, Miss Richmond declaring that she should enjoy the walk. Mr. Severne, who was growing puzzled over things, came to Genevieve’s side as they moved to go. He had been watching for this opportunity all day. Miss Richmond deliberately turned, and waited for George Kirkoswald.

‘Who exactly is the master of the feast?’ she asked in her usual low, deliberate tone, and holding out her hand with the finely gracious gesture that she knew so well how to use. ‘Canon Gabriel! Ah, I have been asking him to tell me why I was not invited, but he was too polite to tell me the truth. Now, I command that you tell me.’

‘I do not know. I have had little to do with the affair. I never saw the list of people who were to be invited.’

‘No? That is somewhat strange, is it not? Well, I bear no malice.’

She said this with such a simple air, there was such a look of truth, of almost touching goodwill, upon her face, that Kirkoswald was altogether perplexed. He paused a moment, thinking of the night under the stars, when he had only waited, waited silently. . . . Was it well to test the efficacy of speech?

CHAPTER XXXIV.

'UPON A TRANCED SUMMER NIGHT.'

'We cannot kindle when we will
The fire that in the heart resides,
The spirit bloweth and is still,
In mystery our soul abides ;—
But tasks, in hours of insight willed,
Can be through hours of gloom fulfilled.'

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

NOR till the noonday sun shone in upon his stricken face did George Kirkoswald break the seal of the letter Miss Richmond had written to him in the middle of the previous night.

It was a long letter, and he read it through to the end, his lips growing white as he read, his face turning to a more ashen gray.

There is no need that it should be given in its entirety here. Every page was characteristic of the writer, of her shallow and uncharitable judgment, of her self-centred life and aim, of the strange forcefulness of her undisciplined mind.

'You are as much my affianced husband to-day as you were on that day,' wrote Miss Richmond ; 'as much as you were when you were moved to write those numerous and passionate letters, entreating me to consent to a speedy marriage. Since seeing you in Birkrigg Gill to-day I have read every letter that you ever wrote to me. Have you forgotten them? If you have forgotten, I will send you copies of a few of them, a few of those you wrote when we were first engaged. Romeo himself had not used a more passionate warmth of expression, nor had he professed an intenser adoration, or sworn a more eternal fidelity. Can it be that you have forgotten? If it should be so, be sure that you shall be reminded, be very sure that you shall not long plead forgetfulness. If you drive me to desperation, believe that I can be desperate. You will learn what a forsaken woman is capable of doing. *Someone else shall learn it also.* Will that suffice? Do I need to threaten more plainly? I write for the purpose of threatening, of threatening you with the worst, with the most public exposure of your letters and conduct that I can obtain. You know how the world will receive it, the world that believes in you so much,

‘Miss Richmond is very handsome, don’t you think so?’ he was saying to Genevieve, reserving in his own mind an opinion that it was a style of handsomeness he did not like. He did not care for the dusky beauty of olive-tints, and purple-black hair. For him the one beautiful woman was a woman who looked like embodied sunshine; and that, it seemed to him, was just how Miss Bartholomew looked to-day.

Genevieve was a little excited—excited by surprise and wonder, and a strange, nameless stirring of nameless fears. She was grateful to Mr. Severne for remaining so faithfully by her side, and trying to amuse her, as he was doing. There was no unhappiness on her face, and her colour was not coming and going as it did sometimes. It stayed on her cheek, and on her lips; her large-irised, violet-gray eyes were full of a beautiful tender light; and the sunshine caught the golden ripples of her hair, and the wind played with it under her wide-brimmed Gainsborough hat, over which the large white feathers were drooping. All her dress was white; she liked to have it so herself, her father liked it too, and there was another who had asked her what she would do if some day she found herself prohibited from wearing any but white dresses? She remembered the day and the question. They seemed far away now. Everything simple, and straight, and comprehensible seemed far away.

They had reached the Rectory by this time. The luncheon was waiting; some thirty or forty people sat down, Miss Richmond taking her place at the Canon’s right hand with a charmingly natural gracefulness. Mr. Severne sat at the other end of the table, happy because Miss Bartholomew was there with her father, not too far away for conversation.

It was not particularly interesting conversation. Mr. Bartholomew was preoccupied; Genevieve was watching for someone who never came—the Canon explained his absence. Mr. Kirkoswald had had to go down into the Bight again to consult about some urgent matter with the builder. Miss Richmond expressed her regret openly. She repeated the expression of it before she went away, and repeated it with so much meaning and emphasis that the people who were left behind wondered over it. Was it not all dead and forgotten, that old affair between the master of Usselby

London except to go to some watering-place for a few weeks in the summer.'

He could remember distinctly how she had looked when she said that. The expression on her beautiful face had disclosed an intense longing for fuller life, human life that should act and react all about her in concentric circles that turned always upon herself. Life at Yarrell Croft must have been something like martyrdom to such a woman. No wonder that when opportunity came she should instinctively seek to make the most of it—the most, though that also meant the worst.

Opportunity had come now, a wide and vast opportunity that doubtless promised to Diana Richmond an almost endless series of reliefs from the tedious monotony of her existence at Yarrell Croft.

The first thing that she would expect would be a visit from George Kirkoswald himself—a visit that would be made to resolve itself into a passionate scene. All the old, dead, hateful passages of his existence would be torn up again, brought to a ghastly and galvanized life, divested of the glamour and the circumstance that had enabled him to live them out without detecting all their hatefulness. Diana herself would play a more picturesque part, and one more entirely suited to her nature. Doubtless even now she was rehearsing it, studying the most effective attitudes the situation would afford.

And the end—what would the end be?

Here again George Kirkoswald did not deceive himself—knowledge left him no room for self-deception.

The end would be inexorableness, ruthless impassibility, triumphant defiance.

As far as he might he would spare himself here, since self-sacrifice in this instance would be of no avail.

If by going to Yarrell Croft, if by throwing himself at the feet of Diana Richmond in a very passion of self-abnegation he could have induced her to spare, not *his* peace of mind, not *his* happiness, but the happiness of another, then the sun had not set upon his despair as it was setting.

For the time being it was despair—the kind of despair that comes so sharply upon a man who has held by a high code of

A minute later Kirkoswald was standing in the room by Genevieve's side. She did not know that he had heard any word of hers. She only saw on his face a great sorrow, a great resoluteness, a great silence. Blended with these there was a strong passionate yearning that she could not but comprehend. He would not sit down, though she asked him to do so.

'I must not stay here,' he said in a quiet, sad way. 'I ought not to have come; it sounds like weakness to say that I could not help it. But I may say it, since it is the truth.'

Genevieve stood quite calmly opposite to him. She still wore her white dress; a great loop of her shining yellow hair had fallen over it; she was looking at him with an infinite wistfulness in her dark beautiful eyes.

'You know that you are perplexing me?' she asked gently, and with an evident effort after self-command.

'Perplexing you! Do I know it? I hardly know anything else; I hardly think of anything else. Night and day now I am wondering what you are thinking of me, how you are feeling toward me; and if when all this torture is over you can ever have the same feeling you have had toward me? It is all the consolation I have now, *that you have had it*. Nothing can take that from me, the knowledge that you have cared for me.'

'And you are thinking that I have changed?'

'Changed! I am looking at you now with an almost boundless wonder because of your changelessness, because of the beauty of your faith in one who must seem so utterly faithless, so utterly worthless. And the intolerable part of it is that I cannot rightly ask you to have faith in me. If I could even ask you to try to keep up your faith I think the worst would be over. . . . I could wait then, I could endure then.'

'And if I say, unasked, that I will have faith, will that help you to endure?' the girl said, standing there tall, and still, and seeming as if a new nobleness had come into her nobility.

'If you say that, it will almost do away with any need for endurance,' George replied with a quick light in his eyes, a 'quick expression of relief, of gladness.

'Then I will say it; I say it of my own accord, that I will have faith in you so long as you shall need my faith.'

It was not that he dreaded her cruelty for himself, but he did dread to feel it falling through him upon another—another whose face in all its pure, spiritual loveliness came before him now as the face of an accusing angel. . . . What had he done ?

What had he done ? And what could now be done ? In his perplexity he got up and left his house, hardly knowing that he left it. It was a moonless night, a dark, clear, blue night with silver stars shining in their places as if they reigned only over a world of utter calmness, utter peace. There was no sound to break the solemn stillness. The fir-trees stood still, the birds were still ; the far-off sea was murmuring at the foot of the cliffs, as if it desired to subdue itself to the wide harmony of the night.

It was a long time before any sense of this harmony wrought itself a way into George Kirkoswald's soul. He walked about his ill-kept grounds and out on to the moor with the cool night air upon his forehead, but his brain throbbed on under the ceaseless questioning to which it could find no answer.

What had he done ? And what might now be done ? Could he do this thing that seemed as if it were the only thing left for him to do ? Could he go down when the morning sunshine came to the peaceful little cottage in the cornfield and say—say to Genevieve Bartholomew—

'You have promised to be mine, and I desire passionately that you will keep your promise. But another woman counts me her affianced husband, and has a thousand proofs that she does not do so without due reason ?'

Could he add to this, that, knowing that other woman's nature, he had had inevitable doubts, inevitable fears, and that he had silenced them ?

Could he also say, without a sense of wrong-doing, that he had intended to disclose the fact of his previous engagement before entering into this newer and truer engagement, but that he had failed of his intention ?

If it came to this, he would not say why he had failed, he would not say that it had been for want of a fitting opportunity, or that he had been hindered by his own great love, which had made him sensitive to the smallest risk, or that in the presence of Genevieve

for the social hour. They have no true silencing awe for us. We speak of them between remarks on the latest political blunder and the fineness of the weather. In a word, we find them interesting.

It is a platitude to say that there are people who find the affairs—the most untoward affairs—of their friends and neighbours interesting. It is also a platitude to say that there are people who have no other interest outside themselves than this of watching the course of events in the little world about them, not watching to sympathy, to help, but to a dull, mindless curiosity. Yet even these find life interesting.

Coming back to our own life, if we have any vision at all, any sense of the picturesque, the pathetic, the dramatic, we must certainly find the past years interesting to look back upon. No outsider can see the fine and subtle interweaving of the threads of experience as we can see them for ourselves. No stranger can intermeddle with that dead joy that can be made to live again for you at your lightest desire ; no other heart knows the bitterness that was in your heart as you walked through the fire in which your youth perished—as you fought your way alone through the floods that overwhelmed the years. No written record could ever have half the interest that that unwritten record has for you, and will for ever have while memory keeps its greenness.

The past has its interest ; the future a more keen, and intense, and mystic interest still. If there is an insipid day it is this one. But we live it patiently, since it leads on to the next.

So, in patience, in a serene and unvexed patience, Genevieve Bartholomew lived through that summer at Netherbank ; the first summer she spent there, and—the last.

Unhappily it was a wet summer—unhappily for her and for her father ; perhaps even more unhappily still for poor Miss Craven.

The sadness was upon all the land. Morning after morning broke in gray gloom, in heaviness, in silence. There was no sound save the plash of rain upon the sodden moss-filled pastures, upon the black worthless hay that was lying in the fields when August came ; upon the green, backward, unpromising corn. The harvest was doomed, and it was the seventh doomed harvest in unbroken succession.

face, to stand there on the edge of the moorland with his hands clasped together, as if in strong entreaty.

So he stood a long time, not knowing that it was long, not knowing that the great dark expanse of cloud that lay athwart the eastern horizon was beginning to lift a little from the sea. When he looked, there was a rose-red glow upon the distant waters.

It was but a faint glow, yet it flashed a light into the soul of the man who stood watching it.

'So it will be!' he said, speaking aloud in his sudden sense of relief. 'So it will be! If I stand through the night, if I stand firm, and still, and silent as I have stood through this night, I shall see the morning.'

CHAPTER XXXV.

AN INVITATION.

'And what then should I say?
Why, truly this: that whatsoe'er men's plight
There is a better and a worser way,
If their discretion be not overthrown
By force of their calamities.'

Philip Van Artevelde.

THOUGH several days had come and gone in the slow torture of suspense, they had left no bitterness; there was yet a smile on the uplifted face of Genevieve Bartholomew when Kirkoswald entered the studio at Netherbank. It was an eloquent smile, and it said plainly, 'Through it all I have known that you would come.'

No history of these days was written in her eyes, or upon her forehead; but Genevieve, looking into George's face, saw certainly that new records were graven there. She might not comprehend what she perceived, but her heart sank swiftly, even at his greeting, comprehending with unerring sureness the touch of change.

He was not aware of the change. He did not realize to how great an extent his solitary strife had darkened his countenance and wrought its influence upon his manner.

The picture, being a commission, would be paid for as soon as completed ; more and more as the days went on he became aware that this was influencing him ; and so strange was his mental constitution that the influence was paralyzing rather than stimulating. There were days when he sat, with his palette set and his brushes before him, from the morning till the evening, unable to raise his hand to the canvas with any impetus from his brain. At such times the dropping of the dull rain upon the skylight seemed to him like Nature's tears of sympathy ; but it was a sympathy that had no help in it, no comfort.

As the picture drew slowly toward its completion he was amused to find that it was already acquiring a kind of local notoriety. His strong effort toward an absolute and inartistic literalness had won for him an appreciation that his idealized 'Ænone,' his fine 'Judas,' his spiritual 'Sir Galahad' would never win for him in the neighbourhood of Murk-Marishes.

Miss Craven had begun to admit to herself that after all, since it was never too late to mend, there might be some chance that Noel Bartholomew would yet become a great artist, and Mr. Crudas had asked permission to bring more than one of his friends to see the admirable accuracy and fidelity with which every window and door of Yarrell Croft had been portrayed, every tree painted just how and where it stood, every fold of the distant hills and dales given, and all on a few feet of canvas.

Here, if anywhere, was a triumph of art ; and Murk-Marishes at last began to be proud of the gray unimpressive man who was so very far from coming up to anybody's idea of a man of genius.

When the picture was at last finished, when the last touch of yellow sunny light had been put upon the hills, the last sweep of purple mystery upon the dales, a handsome frame came down from London, and the picture was placed upon a large easel where it could catch a fuller light.

'I shall not send it home,' Mr. Bartholomew said to Genevieve, who stood beside him looking into the picture with rather wondering eyes. 'I shall write and tell Mr. Richmond that it is completed, and that I should like him to see it before it is sent to Yarrell Croft.'

‘Perhaps Miss Bartholomew may consider me to be sufficiently successful in looking after myself,’ said George, with a touch of bitterness in his tone which certainly seemed to be uncalled for, and which perhaps surprised himself as much as it surprised anybody else. He was feeling very bitter as he sat there in the straight-backed chair of antique oak, where he had placed himself away from the window, away from Genevieve, who sat in the light with her golden head bent over her needle, and her pure, sweet face bereft of all expression save one of patient wonder. He had not prepared himself for this sudden appreciation of the pain and loss that would arise out of his position. The moment was one of trial. Forgive him if he bore it ill.

Noel Bartholomew’s feeling of wonder was quite equal to that of Genevieve, and his first thought was, very naturally, the thought that matters were not going so smoothly between his daughter and his friend as he had brought himself to hope they might. The same idea had occurred to him before during the past few days. It seemed to be confirmed now.

A little silence followed upon George Kirkoswald’s unexpected reply ; but Bartholomew soon ended it.

‘I do not know how that may be,’ he said ; ‘but we are both of us aware that you have proved yourself to be very successful in taking care of others. . . . But I forget, I was not to thank you.’

‘No ; don’t thank me, and don’t remind me.’

‘Very good ; we do not need to remind ourselves.’

Genevieve looked up from her work with a smile, as it in ratification of her father’s remark. She seemed to have a word ready to use with the smile ; but it remained unspoken, dying into silence, as the smile died into the look of patience that had been there before.

‘You will begin to wonder why I have come now,’ George said at last, speaking in a tone that might almost be termed abrupt for him. ‘I have come with an invitation, as much from Canon Gabriel as from myself. The foundation-stone, or memorial-stone, or whatever it may be, is to be laid at Soulsgrif in a fortnight or so. The Canon will let you know the exact day.’

‘The foundation-stone? Do you mean for the music-room?’

'I—I don't know what I should have done if you'd never come to Murk-Marishes!' he exclaimed one day.

It was characteristic of him that he was continuously being impressed afresh by the favourableness of his advantages. But there was danger just now that he might be led into mistake concerning the nature of them.

Genevieve, of course, did not say that it was probable that if she had never come to Murk-Marishes, it was also probable that Mr. Severne's services, as conductor of concerts at Soulsgrif Bight, might never have been required. She never mentioned George Kirkoswald; and it seemed to Mr. Severne that the mention of his name by others did not awaken any very pleasant emotions within her. He was becoming keenly alive to this and similar facts.

He was becoming alive to everything that concerned Genevieve Bartholomew.

She could not help being amused sometimes; but more often she was glad of the brotherly seeming interest that descended even to note the progress of her embroidery. It appeared as if he cared for nothing better than to sit and watch her deft white fingers, almost as white as the lilies that grew to their silken perfection under them. Mr. Severne did not wonder that she liked to embroider lilies better than anything else; she was so like a lily herself; and sometimes when she was a little sad he could not help wondering if any gentle silver rain of sorrow ever came near her. He was thinking of some lines of Wordsworth's that he had in a little book which he always carried in his pocket. He took it out one day—Genevieve was looking very sad that afternoon—and he turned at once to the lines he knew so well.

'That always makes me think of you,' he said, indicating the words as he spoke.

'You have been wretched; yet
The silver shower, whose reckless burden weighs
Too heavily upon the lily's head,
Oft leaves a saving moisture at its root.'

Genevieve smiled.

'What makes you think I have been wretched?' she asked.

'Oh, well, I didn't mean that particularly. Perhaps I don't exactly know what I do mean. But the verse makes a sort of

pressed as if with bitterness. He sat silent for awhile, not knowing how to keep the silence, nor how to break it by speech that cost so much.

His lips parted presently.

'Canon Gabriel will lay the stone,' he said, with most evident effort.

If he might only have explained—if he might only have told them that a month before everything had been arranged in his own mind on quite other lines—if he might have said that there had never been for him the smallest question about the laying of the stone; that he had decided that Genevieve herself should lay it, and that he had intended that her doing so should be taken for an open declaration of the engagement that existed between them—if he might have relieved himself of all this, and then have gone on to the rest, the sudden shock of pain and disappointment that had come upon him, leaving him in perplexity, in dread, in an endless seeming suspense, then it might have been that he would have had less need to crave the dull oblivion that comes of utter weariness. He might have borne the strain after that, and have borne it not so badly, having sympathy.

But it might not be, so he had decided, thinking and hoping that he did well, and at least knowing surely that he had not come to his decision through weakness or self-seeking, or dread of any pain that might come upon himself.

Presently he rose to go, but he lingered about the studio awhile, not seeing the questioning eyes that were now and then lifted to his, not wishing to see them, but knowing that they were lifted, and understanding the unspoken words only too plainly. He would not forget. Some day he would answer them all, and in answering he would make amends for the present silence. He was not conscious that there was something in himself that was worse than any silence. Every moment he betrayed it in his manner. Now, as always, it was a courteous manner, but something was missing from it. The fine openness of its cordiality was gone; in place of it there was restraint, carefulness, and an apparently studious dread of relapsing into the old natural ways that had been so dangerously full of living charm.

Quite suddenly Kirkoswald stopped beside the easel. It was a

'All the same he should have sent a reply. Simple courtesy required that he should do so much as that.'

But the simple courtesy had not been forthcoming : and, so far, Mr. Richmond had not called. It was beginning to be felt as a slight strain on Bartholomew's already over-tense nerves. He declined to accompany Genevieve when she went for her daily walk. He would rather not be out when Cecil Richmond did come, he said. If he went out at all it was after the sun had set, when the bats were wheeling in the air, and the night moths quivering over the meadow-lands.

'You will let me persuade you to-day, father,' Genevieve said, when the yearning to go down to the Bight had grown too strong to be resisted. 'I will write a note for you, and we will leave it to be given to Mr. Richmond if he should call while we are out.'

Bartholomew's hand was weary, his brain and his eye were weary. He had upon him that strong desire to be out under the air of heaven which grows to such a passionate intensity when the man who desires it is overtaken by the fearful double strain of labour and anxiety. Yet not even now would he leave the studio.

'It will not be for long, dear,' he said. 'It is imprisonment, but it is not imprisonment for life.'

'No ! but I wish it had been for a set term, then one would have known what to expect. I feel a sense of oppression every time Mr. Richmond enters my thoughts. It is cruelty to you—to both of us.'

'If so, it is the cruelty of thoughtlessness.'

'Which is as bad as any other cruelty, and as inexcusable.'

There was quite a frown on Genevieve's pale and usually serene face as she crossed the barley-field to go down to the Bight alone. She was going to see Ailsie Drewe, and she had a strong desire that she might meet Cecil Richmond as she went.

There were a few stray cottages at the entrance to the village. The little gardens were gay with scarlet turn-cap lilies ; sweet peas were dropping over the hedges ; nasturtiums were climbing among the jessamine sprays. In the orchards the fruit was maturing on the trees ; the gooseberry-bushes were bending low under ripe, red loads. The blackbirds were busy among the currant-trees. Bees were murmuring and hovering everywhere.

in her father's work. He had always taken an interest in it, but it had not seemed to her that he was in the mood to-day to care whether a commission had been given by one person or another.

Some idea connected with this matter had moved him, this was evident; but it was also evident that it had not moved him to forget the strange coldness and restriction of his new attitude. It was in his manner to her father as well as in his manner to herself. This was not comforting, nor did it tend towards a better comprehension of one whose every word and thought had always seemed so nobly and simply easy of comprehension. The change had been irksome, had it been nothing worse.

'You did not give me any answer about coming down to Soulsgrif,' George said after another pause, and speaking as if he did not care much to receive any answer just then. 'I shall see you again, perhaps,' he added. 'If I do not, you will see the Canon; he will have a better acquaintance with his programme than I have. It is his affair—the whole of it—not mine.'

'You do not speak as if you were anticipating a pleasant affair,' said Bartholomew, with quiet surprise.

'So much the better, since I am not misleading you. But it would be a wiser way not to speak of it at all—not at present. I hardly know what I can say truthfully that I ought to say.'

He was shaking hands with Genevieve as he spoke. Their eyes met for one long instant, long enough for the revelation of all that might be revealed at that moment. For the life of him George Kirkoswald could not have kept back the truth from the glance he gave, even had he wished to keep it back, which could hardly be said of him, utterly at fault with himself and the world as he was. Genevieve was half contented when he turned away. 'Whatever the change may be, it is not *that* change,' she said to herself with a sigh of relief that was half a sob. Then other thoughts, other emotions, came crowding quickly one after the other; but that first thought remained through them all. 'It is not *that* change,' she went on saying to soothe herself. 'It is not that.'

"He loves me still,
Let no one dream but that he loves still."

room. Genevieve could see as she went down that the workmen were still about the place. Some were putting windows into the new cottage, some were making a rustic wooden paling to enclose the garden. There was to be a playground beyond, and some terraces were to be cut with paths winding away across the cliffs to where the barren alum shale merged into the green luxuriance of Birkrigg Gill.

'There'll be no knowin' the place when all's done,' Ailsie Drewe said to Genevieve. 'Mr. Kirkoswald's just been here; you'd meet him, mebbe? He hesn't been gone more nor half an hour, an' I told him 'at Soulsgrif Bight 'ud never again be such a world's-end-of-a-place as it allus had been. He laughed a bit, but he didn't laugh nowt like what he used to. He isn't nut te saäy i' good spirits, miss?'

This was said interrogatively, but Genevieve did not answer, and it seemed to Ailsie Drewe that Miss Bartholomew was not in particularly good spirits either. It was strange that people who had no need to care for the harvest, or for the coming of the herring, and who had nobody at sea to be anxious for when the storms came on, should yet have times of silence and depression. If Miss Bartholomew had happened to be Davy's mother there would have been reason enough for pensiveness and heaviness. . . . Genevieve did not forget to ask after the little lad.

'He's in America, miss; at a port they call New Orleans—so he said in the letter. You should ha' seen it, but Ah've lent it te Marget. Ah couldn't read it mysel'. Ah got it last Tuesday, an' Ah sat leukin' at it all t' daäy, an' cryin' acause Ah couldn't tell one word 'at my bairn said.'

'I wonder what it is that makes him so strangely bent upon a sea-going life?' Genevieve said, remembering the day when he had gone up to Netherbank to say 'good-bye,' and also remembering how she had divined the child's unspoken feeling of finality about the act and the word. 'He doesn't seem to care so much for the sea itself,' she added.

Ailsie's brown eyes filled with slow tears. She sat looking steadfastly away out of the window, so that the tears might not be seen to fall, and a change came into her voice all at once.

'It's a kind o' fate, miss; it's no more nor that, nor no less.

in and out among them, dropping a gentle word here, an encouraging word there; thinking all the while that to that man, or to that little child, he might speak no other word. But the thought in nowise saddened him. Nobody there seemed sad. 'The weariness, the fever, and the fret' of life had been left behind for a little while.

Mr. Severne also was doing his best; he always did his best, though there were people at Thurkeld Abbas who snubbed him a little, because he held himself so cheaply at their service. He was very much at Mrs. Caton's service this morning, but Mrs. Caton was suffering some disappointment. She did not care to put up with the curate while the Canon had walked for at least five minutes by the side of that dear, uncertain little Mrs. Damer, who had such inconvenient attacks of plain-speaking. The curate was made to feel the Canon's indiscretion. Miss Standen was going down with the Pencefolds, and enjoying her walk very much. A little way behind them was Mr. Ishmael Crudas, in a shining new black coat, aggressive white linen, and a pair of very large black kid gloves. It may be supposed that his individuality suffered, but it did not. There was sufficient in the man to enable him to carry off more than this, and even Miss Craven was obliged to acknowledge it as he walked by her side. She was angry with him for having dared to join her on this public occasion, but all the same she had expected it; and now that he was there she was very proud of him, though not, perhaps, quite so proud as he was of her. And indeed she looked all but handsome in the black silk mantle and pink-trimmed bonnet that were still so pretty and becoming. Since the dead-weight of anxiety had been lifted a little she had recovered to a wonderful degree the freshness of her youth, and something of the temper of her youth also. It was many a long day since she had smiled so gladly and freely as she smiled when George Kirkoswald passed by, raising his hat, and wishing her a courteous 'good-day.'

Genevieve and her father were a little in advance. A tiny girl was crossing the road, offering a posy of half-blown white wild roses mingled with scented sprays of blossoming thyme. The little ones were quick to perceive which were the flowers that pleased best. Genevieve was stopping to fasten the posy in her

Yarrell Croft, so that you will probably have a chance of getting accustomed to the guns. But——'

Kirkoswald stopped there. He had been intending to object to the idea of her walking about the roads and field-ways alone just now. The thought struck him with bitterness that the privilege of objection was hardly his.

'You were going to say something,' Genevieve asked, timidly lifting her eyes to George's; and then he saw that there were traces of tears on her face. It was as if the sight took something of strength from him.

He did not reply to her question immediately. When he spoke he asked another question.

'Do you remember that sunny December day in Soulsgrif Bight?' he said. 'It was the first time you went down after the storm. We were talking of trouble, and I asked you if you thought that when trouble came you could speak of it to me?'

'And I said that I could: I remember well.'

'Then what is it that is troubling you now?'

Genevieve smiled; it was so easy to tell him that Ailsie Drewe had unsealed the fountain of her tears. She did not tell him what she had suspected herself, that they had waited an excuse for flowing freely. It is very true that we 'blush one way, feel another way, and weep, perhaps, another.'

It takes many kinds of darkness to make a life of sorrow; but the sorrow may seem one, and the emotions run into each other in ways unknown as yet to scientific analysis.

When Ailsie Drewe's pain and fear had been touched upon with sympathetic insight, Genevieve had yet another tale to tell—the brief story of the boy violinist who had so quickly made such a strong impression. She was grieved that between her shyness and his sudden shame he should have passed beyond her ken un- solaced, unspoken with, unhelped, for that he needed help was but too evident.

'And what am I to do if I come across him?' asked George, with a little amusement in his interest.

'What would you do if you saw me singing in the street for bread?'

A great tenderness came into the man's dark, overshadowed eyes, a great lovingness.

flying in the breezy summer sunshine, a band of music sent its patriotic strains floating up the cliff-side.

‘That is “Rule Britannia,”’ said Canon Gabriel, who had just joined Kirkoswald and the Bartholomews. ‘I mention it that hereafter I may not be classed with Dean Hook, who claimed to be acquainted with two tunes, one was “God Save the Queen,” and the other wasn’t; but I believe no one ever heard him venture the name of the other.’

Quite suddenly there burst upon the throng of people who were coming down the bank a full view of the site of the music-room; nay, much more than the site. The wall was some twelve or fourteen feet high on the seaward side. The ground had been well chosen, though it was only just out of the reach of the wild waves that dashed so often and so madly into the little Bight. It was a kind of plateau just above the houses on the north side. The people would only have to step from their own door to the door of this new place of entertainment which was already the chief topic of conversation among the fisher-folk. They did not understand much about it yet; they were waiting, but not suspiciously, not disdainfully, as Yorkshire folk are apt to wait for the development of any new thing. Since the brave master of Usselby had to do with it, it could only be right and good.

The people were still going downward, the strains of the music still stealing upward, mingled a little with the splash of the waves, and the shouts of children at play by the water-side. Presently another sound came grinding into the harmony, the sound of carriage-wheels coming downward with the crowd. Canon Gabriel turned, wondering a little that anyone should willingly drive down such a road as that. He ceased all at once to wonder.

‘Did *you* invite Miss Richmond?’ he asked, turning with some surprise to George Kirkoswald.

There was a sudden silence, a sudden pain; on George’s face there was a sudden and strange pallor.

‘Is it Miss Richmond?’ he asked, speaking in a voice that seemed like a hoarse echo of his own.

that he was the man he had been on that day, and always before that day, when he had asked of her a word of assurance in Birk-rigg Gill.

The gloom was there now, on every feature of his face, in every gesture, in his very gait as he walked up the lane to the field where the bearded barley was nodding under the red moon.

All the way he was silent; and Genevieve saw that it was a silence that it would be well to leave unbroken.

Would she have been astonished if she had known that he was thinking of another?—if she had known further that that other was Miss Richmond?

All the way he had been thinking of her, wondering what would be the last result of defiance.

Suppose that at this moment he were to take Genevieve's hand in his as they stood there under the ash-tree by the stile, and if he were to tell her all that had passed in those years of blindness and mistake, and all that had happened to bring him into his present perplexity—how would it be with him then?

He seemed to see quite plainly how it would be. It would be easier for him to make his confession now than it would have been at one time. He knew Genevieve better, and he had a clearer insight into the largeness of her nature. Besides he had suffered much, and suffering makes many hard things easy. Then, too, mere change in his suffering promised some relief; and he was sure of sympathy.

Yes, he was sure of sympathy. There would be a shock, a silence, a great surprise. His dishonour would be felt to be as a stain upon her life. Then there would be a great forgiveness, with an aftermath of absolute peace so far as Genevieve was concerned.

The temptation was strong, very strong. He imagined his yielding; he could see the fair face beside him growing fairer in the sudden light of revelation and reconciliation. The wistful look that had lain in the violet eyes so long would be there no longer; the finely curved mouth would smile its own smile again. Life would be taken up where it had been broken off; compensation would flow into the hours; and in the days to be, no account should be taken of this temporary suspension of felicity.

'Carved with figures strange and sweet,
All made out of the carver's brain.'

It had been intended to place an inscription on the stone also, but this intention was held in abeyance. There was only the date, Mr. Kirkoswald's initials, and an awkward, empty space underneath.

A little wooden platform had been raised outside so that the Canon might stand there when the stone was lowered into its place. As soon as his surplice was seen floating above the crowd, there was an instant silence everywhere, a pause before the singing of the hymn which the choir sang in simple, sweet, childlike voices.

Some prayers were read, another hymn sung; then the great carved tablet was lowered and set carefully in its place upon the mortar which the Canon had spread with a new trowel. After that the stone was declared to be duly laid; and the little service of commendation was ended.

At the end of it the Canon stepped forward again to the edge of the platform. He had a few words to say—a few words of explanation, of entreaty, of desire that the building should be a means of helping them all to fulfil the two great commandments. He dwelt most upon the second of the two—the command that there should be brotherhood among men, and all that brotherhood implies. He was growing very earnest as he urged the simple philosophy of his religion. 'Be good, be loving,' he said. 'There is much sorrow in life, much contradiction, but nothing can contradict the truth or the beauty that comes of simple goodness, simple lovingness. St. Paul himself knew of nothing better. He counted the great grand gift of prophecy itself less than this gift of human loving-kindness. The gift of prophecy! Think how glad—glad to the verge of awe—anyone among us standing here to-day would be, if he were to find himself suddenly admitted to the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the seers; endowed with the gift of foretelling future events in the splendidly poetic language of an Isaiah—language that might rouse the world from its indolence and luxury, its worship of wealth, its forgetfulness of God. A man so dowered would hardly know how to express his gratitude. And yet St. Paul counts this power *an inferior power to the gift of loving*. He says it quite plainly. Nay, he says much more—he declares that even faith, strong enough to remove

Certainly now he would wait a little longer, long enough to assure himself that the dawn of better things was at hand ; or that it was not, and not likely to arise out of the quarter toward which he was now looking. His firm impression was that he had seen a promise of light.

The current of his thought was changed altogether ; and the man himself seemed changed.

'Tell Mr. Bartholomew that I will be down in a day or two,' he said, raising his hat, and turning absently, coldly away. Genevieve went through the clinging barley with a pallid, stony face, and an unutterable sinking about that poor loving, longing heart of hers.

CHAPTER XL.

'STRIKE AUDIBLY THE NOBLEST OF YOUR LYRES !'

'O did he ever live, that lonely man,
Who loved—and music slew not ?'

KEATS : *Endymion*.

FOR a week before the giving of the concert in Soulsgrif Bight there was an excitement in the air ; a very pleasant and innocent excitement it seemed to be, productive of courtesies, animations, small vanities, overtures, musical and other. Songs were practised at cottage doors, choruses came swelling out through the closed shutters of the blacksmith's shop.

Mrs. Caton had kindly insisted upon providing the little Sunday-school girls who sang in the church choir with white muslin dresses and blue sashes. Mrs. Damer sent a dozen posies of pink flowers when the evening came. Others sent smiles, evergreens, good wishes, harmonious little compositions of words set to no music but their own.

If underneath all this there was a special ground-tone of sorrow anywhere, it was at Netherbank, which some people counted to be the very centre and source from whence all the gladness and goodness were flowing. An impression had got about that Mr. Kirkoswald had certainly been inspired by the words and ways of

this could be said of him—that he could not be provoked, and that he took no account of any evil! Does it seem as if such a one would be far away from us? It would not be so. He would be here among us, living your life, or living my life. There alone would be the test of his power of human lovingness—if he lived among the unloving, among those who were blind to his love, deaf to his sympathy; who were unable to understand his life, his motives, his aim; who would repay his best efforts with coldness, neglect, contumely, humiliation.

‘Into the life of each one of us there comes some measure of human evil, human hardness, human cruelty. Perhaps, unhappily, some of us must go back to the endurance of such things to-day. . . . Let us think of it in the hour of our need, of this fine ideal of St. Paul, the *love that taketh not account of evil*.’

This was almost the last word. The little descant had only occupied a few minutes. The Canon came down from the platform, Mr. Severne carefully helping him; the band began playing the Old Hundredth, the people began to assort themselves into groups again, and Genevieve, turning, found herself face to face with Diana Richmond and her brother.

Miss Richmond put out a pretty cream-and-gold coloured hand.

‘How are you to-day, Miss Bartholomew?’ she asked with quiet emphasis, and looking intently into Genevieve’s face as she spoke, as if watching for some sign. Genevieve was blushing, looking somewhat confused. The Canon was coming toward them, with Mr. Severne; and Miss Richmond began to speak of the little address.

‘It was so perfect in its way, was it not?’ she was saying in a tone that had something almost like humility in it. ‘You would know better how to express it than I do—the charm of it, I mean. Is it his style? There is something—what shall I call it—distinction?—that makes the most commonplace things seem new when they have been repeated by him.’

The Canon came up, looking a little as if he had not been able to help hearing what Miss Richmond was saying. Mr. Severne blushed as if she had spoken of him.

‘What am I to say for myself?’ Miss Richmond asked in her prettiest way of Canon Gabriel.

had sat, brooding, fearing, looking into the darkness that was upon his life, until brooding had paralyzed him.

So strangely had his power gone from him that he hesitated to compel himself to touch the 'Ænone,' the 'Sir Galahad,' or the 'Judas.' The latter was a long way from being finished; the two former were so nearly done that the work required upon them was of a most delicate kind, and needed judicious and well-considered handling. Another hindrance lay in the fact that a great desire had come upon him to make some radical alterations in the dress and background of the 'Ænone.' Only at Genevieve's entreaties he had deferred his project. She was trusting that the desire would pass away.

She knew now plainly that it was need of money that had compelled him to work at the commissions given by Mr. Richmond. For awhile she had been rather glad that he had had these to fall back upon; but long since all gladness had faded out, long since she had begun to share her father's unspoken sense of wrong and oppression.

But for his poverty the pictures had gone into the fire long ago. He had come to hate them, to hold himself in contempt for having consented to paint them.

The humiliation of his present position was intense—complete in its intensity.

Even had there been no question of any previous acquaintance between Miss Richmond and himself, there was a peculiar and searching sting in this disdainful silence, this discourteous refusal to reply by so much as one word to the two courteous letters that Bartholomew had written. Both Miss Richmond and her brother would be aware of the fact that Noel Bartholomew could not walk over to Yarrell Croft to ask what was the cause of this contemptuous attitude.

No other subject of thought was possible. This one thing had wrought itself into every act and every phase of his life. It was turned to every possible light, judged by every possible standard; it was blamed; it was excused; it was denounced; it was forgiven.

Anything would have been better to bear than this. Had the young man come to Netherbank and said openly, 'I do not like

'This is neither the time nor the place to discuss grave matters,' he said at length, speaking with effort. 'Forgive me if I seem to have little tact in introducing anything grave. I will only say a word. It concerns the letter I received from you. You would get my reply?'

'Pardon me; it was no reply.'

'No, you are right there,' said George; and in truth Miss Richmond was right. The answer he had sent was little more than an acknowledgment of the receipt of her letter, and it had been sent simply because he had not been able to bring himself to a thing so discourteous and cowardly as refusal to reply to a letter written by a woman, though that woman were his greatest enemy. 'You are right,' he said: 'I wrote too briefly; but I thought it better to do that than to say anything I might afterward repent having said.'

'You are growing cautious, she said with a smile.

'If only it be not too late,' replied George with meaning. 'But I did not allude to the matter for the pleasure of talking it over. It occurred to me when you spoke just now that, perhaps, your coming down here to-day might imply some change—some modification of your intention. I thought if it were so I would make it easy for you to express the change—that was all. It was a hope. If it were a mistaken one you have only to say so.'

Miss Richmond raised her eyes slowly in their dusky depths; her crimson lips curved slightly towards disdain.

'If I understand your hope rightly, it was most decidedly a mistaken one,' she said, speaking in low yet firm—it might almost be said bitter—tones.

Kirkoswald said no more; there was nothing more to be said just then. The crowd was going up the hill with them, busy with its own enjoyment; the band was playing a sentimental air with variations. Someone said it was 'Love Not.' Mrs. Caton had secured the Canon's attention at last, or rather her little daughter, Ianthe, had secured it, which was the same thing. Mr. Bartholomew was giving eminent satisfaction to Miss Craven by walking on the other side of Mr. Crudas. A little behind them was Genevieve, and the puzzled, but quite happy, Mr. Severne. Things were just as they should be from his point of view.

thing to bring matters to a crisis of some kind. He was prepared to do anything that might be done.

He did not speak of it to Genevieve. Keturah was there in the background, and Miss Craven. Mr. Crudas was waiting by a street corner at Thurkeld Abbas.

Mr. Severne being powerfully under the influence of that general nervousness which is so afflictive to the amateur mind when it dares the pains and pleasures of professional responsibility, had gone down to the Bight nearly an hour before. His nervousness did not show itself in any distressing form. He was waiting at the door of the music-room to welcome Miss Bartholomew: his crimson blush was framed in a dropping archway of evergreens, and lighted by a hundred little lamps of pink pearly glass. Good wishes were inscribed in holly leaves upon the walls; great pots of flowers, chrysanthemums, dahlias, curving ferns, China-asters, and a few late roses stood all along the front of the platform. Behind there was a woven screen of small-leaved ivy and amaranth.

A few old people had taken their seats already; they sat there with solemnly wondering faces, and a new gravity in their grave eyes. When Mr. Kirkoswald came they stood up, and the old women made curtsies in the ancient fashion. It was all very impressive so far. Just then the children began to file out two by two from the door to the right of the platform. There was no gravity there. So much white muslin, so many blue sashes, such a unanimity of pink-and-green posies could only be displayed with smiles and bright glances.

The door by the platform led through into the cottage. All was surprise here, even for Genevieve. The amateurs had not yet arrived; but there was an elderly woman sitting by the fire expecting their arrival—a pale, sad woman, with a neat cap, almost like a widow's cap, half concealing her soft red hair. She had a black dress on—quite new; and she spoke in a refined and very quiet manner when Mr. Kirkoswald turned to her.

‘Where is Wilfred, Mrs. Gordon?’ he asked. ‘I want to see him for a moment before the entertainment begins.’

‘He is in the reading-room, sir,’ replied the woman, with an almost anxious deference. ‘I believe he is arranging the new

and the mistress of Yarrell Croft? Had there not been new whispers on the wind of late, whispers of another and a likelier attachment? The people who approved of Genevieve were beginning to think a little hardly of George Kirkoswald. They had imagined him to be a man who would at least know his own mind about a thing so important as this; and they had not imagined him to be one who would trifle for an hour in any matter in which trifling could lead to danger or to pain.

* * * * *

A few hours later, when the schoolroom tea was over, and the people had all gone quietly home, George Kirkoswald dragged himself somewhat wearily up through Murk-Marishes to the cottage at Netherbank. Mr. Bartholomew had gone across the fields with Ishmael Crudas. Genevieve was alone in the little sitting-room; she had opened the casement window that looked out upon the orchard; the low sun was streaming through the leaves of the climbing rose-tree that went up over the thatch; the pink petals came floating slowly in over the flower-pots. A pair of white and pearl-tinted doves had perched on the window-sill, the one was cooing softly, the other was listening with her head bent downward, listening steadfastly as if with a quite human power of attention.

Kirkoswald had intended to go down to the studio, not knowing that Bartholomew was not there. His footstep made no sound on the rank grass. Presently he stopped by the cottage wall. Had the cooing of the doves arrested him? Was there anyone there out of sight among the rose-leaves, speaking softly in the low red light?

It was only a few words that he heard, words spoken gently to gentle living things, as people will speak sometimes who live much alone, and are much acquainted with sorrow.

‘Do you love each other so?’ the voice was saying in a musical undertone. ‘Do you like to sit there and say loving, comforting things? Do you understand each other? Do you always understand each other, even when you are apart and cannot speak? Have you faith in one another always; or is there no need of faith in that world of yours? I wish I knew, I wish I might know if you perplex each other, give each other pain.’

sat; if she had done so, she could hardly have seen on his face any indication of the intensity of his emotion. Not the smallest vibration of the penetrating voice escaped him; its very unevenness of tone was, in a certain sense, a pleasure to him, though he felt certain that the unevenness arose out of imperfect control over a too-perfect sympathy with the touching words of the song.

'Behind no prison grate, she said,
That bars the sunshine half a mile,
Are captives so un comforted
As souls behind a smile.
God's pity, let us pray, she said,
God's pity, let us pray.

'Ye weep for those who weep, she said,
Ah, fools! I bid you pass them by.
Go weep for those whose hearts have bled
What time their eyes were dry.
Whom sadder can I say? she said,
Whom sadder can I say?'

All the rest of the concert went by like a dream for Kirkoswald. The Miss Damers and Mr. Severne sang a trio; Wilfred Stuart came forward again with his violin, and was received tumultuously; then everybody sang *God save the Queen*. Congratulations, thanks, transports, all went by like sounds that pass when sleep is upon the brain, leaving only a sense of weariness and confusion. George was glad to get out from the room, away from the green wreaths, the compliments, the pink lamps, the elaborate 'good-nights.' Under the quiet stars life might come to its own again.

CHAPTER XLI.

'I SHOULD HAVE BEEN MORE STRANGE, I MUST CONFESS.'

'Yes! hope may with thy strong desire keep pace,
And I be undeluded, unbetrayed;
For if of our affections none find grace
In sight of Heaven, then wherefore hath God made
The world which we inherit.'

MICHAEL ANGELO.

It was some time before the stars shone down upon the utter quietness that George Kirkoswald desired. Not till Thurkeld

‘And if circumstance seem strong against me?’

‘I will try to be as strong as circumstance.’

So she spoke in a vain confidence, not knowing that it was vain. How should she know until circumstance had borne her down before it as a reed in the marsh borne down before the wind?

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

NOT YET THE SUN HATH DRIED HIS THOUGHTFUL TEARS.’

‘Brutus, I do observe you now of late ;
I have not from your eyes that gentleness
And show of love as I was wont to have :
You bear too stubborn and too strange a hand
Over your friend that loves you.’

SHAKESPEARE : *Julius Caesar*.

‘LIFE is interesting if not happy,’ said a great thinker the other day, and we all of us admitted the truth and felicity of the phrase on the instant. We had known it all the while, but we had been waiting for someone to say it.

Life is always interesting, because it is always hopeful.

From the man of highest and most eager culture, to the last and dullest and most self-contented Philistine, you will nowhere find a soul living out its days without hope of some good it has not yet attained.

We are seldom strong enough to turn round upon ourselves in times of really great and desperate trial, and look dispassionately upon the interest underlying the hour and the event. It is there. In some cases, doubtless, it affords a certain support, but it does so unconsciously. We should look upon ourselves as traitors to ourselves, and rightly, if we had the hardihood to look up from under the Cross, and say, ‘This is interesting.’

There is something amazing in the alacrity with which we most of us find an element of interest in the worst calamities of others. The daily newspaper sells a double edition when there is a Tay Bridge disaster, when a *Princess Alice* comes into collision in the Thames, when a *Eurydice* with several hundred souls on board disappears in a snow-squall. These things are topics of conversa-

'Before I question that statement I must know what happened on that evening of which you have such a distinct remembrance.'

'Very little happened. I went slowly over the moor by the light of the harvest moon. The wind rose a little, it came in gusts; one gust brought to me from afar the faint sound of a violin. Think of it—violin music on Langbarugh Moor after dark! I have no doubt but that I should have taken it to be the death-song of the Kirkoswalds, if you had not described the playing of your *protégé*.'

'And after?'

'After I had to take some slight trouble to discover the exact spot from whence the sound came. It was at a greater distance than I could have believed. When I did reach it I found it to be a kind of hollow under the edge of a heathery crag. Your wild-eyed youth was sitting on a gray boulder, playing to himself in the moonlight. There was a touch of romance about the situation.'

'And Mrs. Gordon was not there? She is his mother?'

'She is his mother, and she was in London, poor woman, trying to hide herself, in order to escape from the wretched treatment of her second husband. It is a most heartrending story. The boy told me a little that night after we got home; the mother told me a little more when she came, and I have guessed the rest. It seems that originally she was a kind of upper-servant in an old Scotch family, and she married a son of the house against the wish of his people. They had only this one boy, Wilfred, and his father designed him for the Church; but unfortunately Mr. Stuart did not live past the child's tenth year. They seemed to have been a very happy little family, with sufficient means, and the widow was not left in poverty. But she must needs marry again, and marry a scoundrel, who has robbed her and her child of every penny they had; and the boy, in obedience to his mother's wish, was making his way into Scotland, to see if he could obtain any assistance for her from his father's relations. His money failed him at York, and he was intending to attempt the rest of the journey on foot. Think of it, with his lameness!'

'Was he always lame?'

'No; his step-father, in a fit of drunkenness, threw him and

Was it the weather that was affecting Noel Bartholomew to so great an extent? Did he feel the pressure of the heavy gray, rain-laden clouds upon his brain? Genevieve knew that he missed the constant exercise that he had been accustomed to take—she missed it herself; and they agreed that the appetite for outdoor life was capable of causing as keen suffering as the appetite for daily food when it came to be denied its legitimate satisfaction.

So far as his work was concerned, he had done the best he might do—the best and the most; but the best was not good, and the most was far below what he had hoped. Those summer months, upon which he had counted so much, were gone by—gone in suffering, in comparative unproductiveness. Want would have stared him in the face if he had looked that way. But he had not looked; he had hoped on bravely, persistently, silently.

This strange trial would pass as others had passed, if he only stood firm. Had he not that word of Thackeray's for his consolation, declaring the possession of genius itself to be of hardly superior value to the power of holding on?

He knew that holding on was not an easy thing, nor so simple as it might seem; nevertheless, since it had to be done it were well to do it quietly.

When he came to think of it, he found a word of higher authority than Thackeray's, and older. The thirteenth chapter of the third book of the 'Imitation of Christ' seemed to have been written for his present need.

'Where is thy faith?' asked the dead voice that seems to be speaking so near to us at times. 'Stand firmly and with perseverance; take courage and be patient; *comfort will come to thee in due time.*'

In this temper he had waited; in this temper he had worked when work was possible. Of late he had put aside all other work, and had wrought at the view of Yarrell Croft whenever it was possible so to do. Having his sketches, it was comparatively mechanical work; and it could be done without much reference to the light. Besides, he had another motive, a motive that seemed so pitiful to himself that he kept it out of his own consciousness as much as he could.

the yearning tenderness that beset him, that was always in him, though he set it in such harsh keeping.

Even yet he would not ask her to continue her faith in him ; he told himself that he could not while that dead promise was held by another woman to have life in it. To do this would be to add dishonour to dishonour.

He could not forget—not for an hour—that an engagement was held to exist, that he was one of the two parties to it, and that the other counted every written word to mean the same thing to-day that it had meant years before. To him that old false bond was as the bond of an old false marriage, hateful, not binding, yet full of potency for pain and ill. He knew perfectly well that Diana Richmond did not expect him to fulfil that engagement now. But for some reason of her own, which he could but darkly divine, it suited her purpose to hold him back by threats from a marriage with Genevieve Bartholomew. That she had a purpose, that she chose to hide it in mystery, he was fully convinced. He was convinced also that the mystery would be made plain if he would but wait.

He was sick to the heart of waiting now. Surely he might say so ; surely he might cover his face with his hands and cry aloud :

‘I am weary of all this ! I am very weary ! Genevieve, my child, you will believe that I am weary ?’

She drew a little closer to him under the shadow of the starlight. She laid one hand gently upon his arm, and let it rest there.

There was something that was almost a sob in her voice as she spoke ; it sounded full of tears.

‘If you are weary, then I am not,’ she said. ‘If you are troubled, if this silence, this coldness between us troubles you, then I have no trouble. I can bear it all. Oh, ten times more than all, since I know certainly that you are bearing it too !’

‘Did you think, then, that I was not ?’ George asked in pained surprise. ‘What have you thought of me ? Tell me how I seem to you. Tell me the worst.’

‘There is no worst now. The worst is the sorrow that you have. . . . I may not ask about it ? . . . You would tell me if you could tell me ?’

‘You think he might require some alteration?’

‘It is possible; it is possible, too, that he may not approve of it. I should hardly like to have it coming back again to be altered to suit his taste.’

‘His taste is for colour; I think you have considered it.’

‘Don’t be ironical, dear.’

‘Mr. Kirkoswald says that I have a gift of irony if I were to allow myself to develop it.’

‘Is he afraid of it that he comes so seldom?’

Then seeing the quick change of colour on his daughter’s face, the unmistakable pain, Bartholomew began to speak of some other subject; but he did not forget this one. More than ever he was perplexed by the change in George Kirkoswald.

Something had happened, something that had turned the man aside from being himself. He came and went in fitful ways; his mood was capricious when he did come. To-day he would be sad and silent, and betray a touching and wistful humility, as if conscious that the impaired and imperfect friendship had been impaired solely by himself. Another day, and all that would be changed; there would be nothing visible save a kind of inner strenuousness with hardness of manner and unrest of soul.

There were days—sad days enough—when the artist wondered within himself that a man whose worldly well-being was so unmistakable as was that of George Kirkoswald should find himself so far out of parallel with the trend of circumstance. It was barely conceivable to Noel Bartholomew just then. But nevertheless, none of these things touched his loyalty, or his faith. All would be made plain when the moment came.

The music-room was finished by the end of August—that is to say the roof was on, and the floor was laid. Kirkoswald’s interest in that had never abated; and other people’s interest seemed to be growing about his own. Sir Galahad was working with a will with a view to his position as conductor of the entertainments to be given; and it was very natural that he should need a good deal of advice and help from Miss Bartholomew, seeing that his own musical knowledge was hardly equal to the demands likely to be made upon it. It was fortunate that Netherbank was within an hour’s walk of the Rectory at Thurkeld Abbas.

becoming. She looked up at Cecil, who was standing on the rug before her, too breathless, and apparently too much stunned, to know exactly how to begin the thing he wanted to say.

'You like my Leonardo-da-Vinci cap, Cecil?' she said almost as soon as the wondering Félicie had closed the door.

She had not taken the cap off. It was new and becoming; therefore it might have its value in an argument.

Cecil took no notice of the question; he was trying to master himself. He remembered other occasions when he had not mastered himself, and after which he had had to endure much remorse.

He held out the letter that was in his hand.

'Look at that,' he said to his sister, speaking in hoarse, peremptory tones. 'Read it.'

Miss Richmond had seen that it was from Bartholomew; but she took it quite coolly, and glanced over it.

It was the third letter. Like the others, it was brief and courteous; but, meaning it to be final, Bartholomew had expressed himself a little more urgently. He had added an expression of surprise that his two previous letters should have been disregarded.

Diana, having read the note, put it on a table beside her; then she folded her beautiful hands complacently upon her knee, looking up at her brother from under her half-closed eyes, as if the epistle had contained an invitation to dinner, which she was doubtful about accepting.

'What is the meaning of it?' the young man asked briefly.

'Of this note? It seems to concern a picture.'

'One of the two I told you of when you came back from London. I told you that I had given Bartholomew an order to paint me two.'

'Mere sketches, I understood.'

'It doesn't matter what you understood. There are things I wish to understand now. . . . You have opened two letters addressed to me?'

'I have, dear.'

'When was it?'

'Oh, some time ago! I think you were out shooting when they came.'

picture in my mind—a picture of a tall, beautiful lily, drooping a little, and all weighed down with shining drops of rain.'

'You are growing poetical!'

'Am I? That is because I come so much to Netherbank.'

'Or else because you read this book so much.'

'Is it a nice book, do you think? Do you like it? because if you do, keep it—please keep it. I should so like to know that you had something of mine.'

CHAPTER XXXIX.

'I SAW THIS YOUTH AS HE DESPAIRING STOOD.'

'Fortune has not been kind to me, good friends:
But let not that deprive me of your loves,
Or of your good report.'

Philip Van Artevelde.

ONCE, when George Kirkoswald had not been at Netherbank for a fortnight or more, Genevieve had a fancy that he was down in Soulsgrif Bight, hoping to see her there. She hardly comprehended the feeling, it was so strong, so sure, so full of yearning.

It was an August day, dull, gray, windy; yet too full of life and movement to be depressing. There was still no sunshine; the haymakers were turning the hay in the sodden fields; the corn was pale and unripe, some of it was lying on the ground as if an army had passed over it.

All day Noel Bartholomew had remained in his studio, working at the second picture that Cecil Richmond had commissioned him to paint. The first was still on the large easel, still standing in the full light. It was covered with a curtain of old embroidery, which was lifted from time to time when neighbours came, asking to see the view of Yarrell Croft.

It was over a fortnight now since the note had been written, saying simply that the picture was finished, and that it awaited Mr. Richmond's approval.

No answer to that note had been received.

'I suppose he intends to call,' Mr. Bartholomew said when Genevieve expressed some surprise.

'It would interest you to know that you are considered to be developing an eccentricity that shows you to be already on the extreme verge of sanity?'

'The extreme verge of sanity! That is a nice, neat phrase. Is it your own?'

Cecil buried his face in his hands for a moment. What could he say, what could he do in the teeth of such studied and cruel elusiveness?

'Is it my own?' he said bitterly. 'It seems that nothing is my own, not even my letters. It is maddening, maddening, to be treated like this; to be treated like a child—nay, worse than any child would be treated by any honourable woman.'

'You are growing eloquent, and you are speaking better grammar than you usually do speak,' said Miss Richmond, leaning her head back against the white lace. Then she took off her velvet cap; it interfered with the ease of her attitude.

Again Cecil stood silent for a little while.

'And this is all I am to expect from you? You will give me no explanation, make no apology; you will not even give me the satisfaction of knowing your reasons for acting as you have done?'

'I have told you that my reasons are beyond your comprehension,' said Miss Richmond, speaking with the same cool deliberateness that she had used from the beginning.

'You admit, at least, that you had reasons?'

'Certainly I had.'

'They must have been tolerably strong ones?'

'They were very strong.'

'And you are satisfied with the result?'

'The result has not been reached yet. I will tell you if it satisfies me when I arrive at it.'

What could there be behind all this? Cecil Richmond knew but very little of his sister, of the real life she had lived underneath the seeming life. Of her hopes, her fears, her designs, her disappointments, he knew nothing. He had been at school during the time of her engagement to George Kirkoswald; he had known of it, but he had not been interested in it; and he had no definite idea of the manner in which it had come to be broken off. He had a vague impression that his sister had never cared much for

There was a turn in the road. One of the tiny thatched cottages, with its front garden and its back orchard, was down in a green, leafy hollow to the left. There were children standing by the wicket-gate, listening, looking, wondering.

Under the willow-tree by the roadside a young man, with a pale face and long, fair hair, was playing a violin. As Genevieve came up one of the children ran out with a penny, and the young man moved forward to take it with difficulty. He was very lame; there was something pathetic in his lameness, there was something more pathetic still in the sudden glow of shame and confusion that spread over his face as he turned and met the sympathetic eyes that were fixed on his. The bow dropped from the strings, and the violinist moved painfully, yet with some dignity, away out of sight, disappearing along a narrow path between two deep hedges of hawthorn.

Genevieve was curiously impressed. She had caught the air he was playing: it was from Mendelssohn's *St. Paul*, '*But the Lord is mindful of His own.*' It was strange to hear an air like that played by a street musician, and played as that was played. There were other strange things that came floating out of the brief scene. The boy's face—he seemed little more than a boy—was one that would not soon be forgotten.

It was not only a sad face; there was something of surprise in its sadness, something of disdain, as if he scorned himself for the thing he did, while wondering that he could do no other.

Besides, there was a look of race about the setting of the hazel eyes, about the curving of the upper lip, about the turn of the head on the shoulders—a look that shabby clothing could not touch in any way. No; Genevieve would not forget him, nor would she forget his playing. All the way down into Soulsgrif Bight she heard the strain. It was as if some one sang the words:

'But the Lord is mindful of His own: He remembereth His children.'

Yet it was difficult to ignore a certain inconsistency between the plaintiveness of the music and the touch of wildness, of irreconcilableness in the manner and appearance of the musician.

Ailsie Drewe lived on the side of the bay opposite to the music-

rich man it had been popularly supposed that he would be. Latterly some considerable losses in the shape of unpaid rents had followed upon the bad harvests ; some of the farms were now unlet ; and Mr. Damer might have made some rather surprising disclosures if he had been so minded.

All this Cecil knew ; and more than once the fact that he had given a commission for two expensive pictures had caused him some slight uneasiness, more especially as he did not know how expensive they might be.

Still it was, of course, very absurd to suppose that he would be unable to pay for them. There would be a scene or two between him and Diana ; that he had been prepared for from the first. But he was not unaccustomed to scenes, and he had ceased to be much impressed by them.

The discovery he had made this morning of his sister's inexplicable conduct with regard to Bartholomew's letters had complicated the affair in his mind considerably.

It would have been a relief to him if he could have taken Diana at her word—if he could have gone down to the studio at Netherbank, and told the simple truth. If he could have done that he might have met Bartholomew without confusion of face, and there would have been no need for him to condescend to subterfuge.

He went into the greenhouse on the upper terrace, and sat there some time with a cigar between his lips, considering what he had really better do now. It seemed to him that it would be exceedingly difficult to do the thing he felt he ought to do : to go down to Netherbank and say that, owing to a mischance for which he was in nowise responsible, the letters had never reached him. Suspicion would certainly arise out of this ; besides, it would be disagreeable.

Presently a happy thought struck him—Cecil considered it to be a happy one. There was a man—Sharpe, the plumber—at work among the water-pipes in an adjoining conservatory. Sharpe's home was at the upper end of the village of Murk-Marishes. Nothing would be easier than for him to call at Netherbank before he came to his work on the following morning. Sharpe should fetch the picture, and he should take a message—if he blundered over the message so much the better.

It's years ago now—he was nobbut a bairn o' six or seven when he used to wake out of his sleep night after night cryin' out 'at his father wanted him—his father 'at he'd never seen. An' nothing would pacify the bairn; he'd go on cryin', "Take me to my father; he's callin' o' me, he's waitin' o' me; he wants me to go wiv him, mother." . . . An' Ah know it, miss; Ah know it; the little lad 'll ha' te go.'

Ailsie stopped, crying bitterly; and Genevieve cried too, till Ailsie got up and showed her the drawer where she kept the boy's small possessions: the tools that he had used when he made the model of the *Viking*, a picture-book full of ships that Canon Gabriel had given to him, his Sunday-school reward books, a pair of his baby shoes, and a thick, bright curl of his yellow hair.

'Ah look inta that drawer every night, miss, before Ah go te bed, an' it's allus like partin' wi' the bairn afresh, an' Ah wonder where he is, an' if his father's waitin' for him yet, an' how long he's set to wait. . . . That daäy when the *Viking* went doon i' the Bight Ah knew 'at my husban' weren't far away fra me then. Ah thought mebbe he might hear me when Ah said, "It's me 'at 'll ha' te wait noo, Jamie; Ah'll ha' te wait all aloàn as lang as Ah live, an' then Ah'll ha' te come an' try te find ya both." I allus think 'at Ah sall find 'em. Ah've more hope o' that nor I hev o' seein' Davy again here.'

Genevieve went away shortly afterward, but the tears still kept coming unbidden to her eyes as she went up Soulsgrif Bank in the gray afternoon light. There was no pale, fair-haired violinist under the willow by the cottage in the lane now, but Genevieve, half stopping to look for him, saw another and a taller figure coming by the narrow pathway under the hawthorn hedge. It was George Kirkoswald, as she perceived at a glance, and a very brief space of time brought him to her side. Just as he came up some shots were fired in the furzy hillside pasture close at hand. Genevieve was startled, and the fact that she was startled helped to account for the sudden glow of crimson on her face.

'Are you not yet used to that sound?' George asked, glancing over the hedge with some annoyance as he spoke. 'It is Mr. Richmond,' he continued. 'I believe there is a shooting party at

ower wi' me to-morrow mornin'. He's been ower thrang* to get doon, he said. An' he was sure to like it, sure 't wad be all right.'

Bartholomew was pale, and Genevieve felt that her lip was quivering to the sudden strange agitation that had come down upon her father. Pictures which had been sold from his easel for large sums of money, and had won wide reputation before leaving the studio, had been sent away with less emotion than this.

'I am afraid you will not be able to take it to Yarrell Croft without assistance,' Bartholomew said to the man. 'This is the picture. It is a considerable size, you see.'

'It is; but my word it's a bonny one! Why, that's Craig's old house, up again Baldersby Mere; an' there's t' old oak-tree an' all. It's a despert bonny pictur'! But, as you say, it is sizable; it'll be a matter o' four feet wide wi' the frame. Still, Ah sall allus manage as far as our house. An' Ah can get somebody to help ma to Yarrell wi' 't i' t' mornin'. Ah sall be startin' hours afore you get up; that's why Ah com to-night. . . . An' Ah sall take care on 't —you may trust ma for that.'

'Certainly, I can trust you,' said Bartholomew, helping the man to put a wrapper round the picture. Then he assisted him with it to the gate at the lower end of the field. Genevieve stood alone in the studio, wondering, listening to the wind that came moaning over the marsh; to the beckoning fingers that tapped with melancholy sound upon the window-pane.

It was some time before her father came back. He was quite pale and calm. Genevieve could see on his face the look of prayer, of thanksgiving, sent up while he was out under the stars. But she saw with surprise, with concern, that there was no sense of relief visible in him as yet. Had the tension been too great to be taken off all at once? Had his whole being been so set to the minor airs of pain that even deliverance from pain could not change the key?

'You are relieved, father?' she said, as they were preparing to leave the studio. 'It is some satisfaction to you that the picture has been sent for?'

'Yes, I am relieved, child,' the artist replied. 'But I am oppressed now by the knowledge that I have borne the strain so

* Thrang (or throng), busy.

'I should take you home,' he said, 'and I should try to make your life so fair that you would forget that it had ever been other than fair.'

'Then think of me if you find my lame boy wounded by the wayside. I am sure he is wounded, I am sure he has fallen among thieves, I am sure the Priest and the Levite have passed by on the other side, leaving him half dead.'

They were passing through the village of Murk-Marishes now. The sun had set, the children were going home; the blacksmith's anvil ceased ringing as they passed the forge at the upper end of the village street. Just then a great red harvest moon began to rise over the eastern ridge of the moor. Slowly the glow of it spread behind the dark, rugged outline, crimsoning the whole heaven above; the trunk of a leafless oak-tree was slanting athwart its disc, throwing out gaunt, supplicating arms. There was a quietness in the evening; but somehow it was a quietness that was not peace, and was far from any gladness.

No word had passed between these two since that word that had been said on the evening after the small fête in Soulsgrif Bight. It seemed far away now, and somewhat overlaid by the various meanings of subsequent experience. There had been no change, none that could be indicated, or alluded to; but the subtleties of feeling escape definition, and the result of contradictory emotions is apt to disappoint even one's own calculation. Genevieve would probably have found some difficulty in answering a sudden question as to her love, or her faith, with absolute truthfulness at the present moment.

The girl was clinging strongly to that faith of which she had declared herself to be possessed, but it needed every effort she was capable of making to enable her to hold by it steadily.

To the last she would hold by it; not till it was torn from her grasp would she let it go.

She did not fear that it was likely to be so torn; all her belief turned toward a sudden passing away of gloom and pain. It was for this that she watched, for this that she waited.

At any moment she might meet George Kirkoswald on the moor, by the sea, in the village street; and meeting him she might see at a glance that the cloud was off his soul, that he was free,

seeing that the little lad was hardly equal to the task, Mr. Bartholomew came out from his cottage and helped for an hour or two, from sundown till after the moon was up. Genevieve with a light rake helped Miss Craven to gather up the stray ears from the stubble.

'This is idyllic, if you will,' said Genevieve, resting on her rake, and pushing her wide-brimmed hat away from her forehead.

'It is the best thing left on this earth,' replied the overtaxed artist. 'If I had my life to begin again, I would live it out of doors, let the cost be what it might.'

Presently the harvesters went home; the men with the reaping-hooks over their shoulders, the women with cans, baskets, babies, bottles, all made up into bundles together. They stopped a little by the stile to gossip; then a woman came up out of the lane in the moonlight, and along the field-path to where Genevieve and her father were still sauntering to and fro.

'You won't know me. I'm Margaret Sharpe,' she said in a pleasant and rather refined voice, 'Ambrose Sharpe's wife. And my husband's working at Yarrell Croft. He took the picture home yesterday morning all right; and Mr. Richmond said 'at Ambrose was to tell you 'at he liked it very much.'

'Oh, thank you!' said Mr. Bartholomew, concealing his amusement, 'thank you. I hope you haven't had to come up from the village on purpose to bring the message?'

'No, sir, no, I haven't. But I told Ambrose I'd let you know; so as he mightn't have to come up here after his day's work. Good-night, sir. . . . There's no message to take back?'

'No, none, thank you. Good-night.'

A bat came fluttering insanely over the sloping barley-stooks; a late bird flew by on its frightened wing as Mrs. Sharpe went hurrying into the shade.

'This is new experience for you, my father,' Genevieve said, having humour in her tone.

'It is, child. But—pardon me—I think we had better not talk of it. I cannot trust myself to talk of it, not even to you. It is amusing, and some day I *may* laugh at it all. But I do not think I shall. I have a curious feeling about it—it is like the oppression that is in the air before a thunderstorm.'

For all this there would be a price to be paid ; and he told himself that he would have been prepared to pay it if he might have known the utmost to which it was likely to amount ; if he might have known further that payment would be demanded from himself alone.

But again he told himself that, unfortunately, none knew better than he knew of what Miss Richmond was capable. Her threats had been open in part, and dark in part, but he knew well that she was equal to persistent fulfilment of them to the last letter.

Still, at that moment but a light wind of thought would have swayed him toward the risk and the certainty of full disclosure. He lifted his eyes to Genevieve's face ; there was a smile there : on her lips there was a small yet disconcerting civility.

'Will you not come in for a little while ?' she said. 'My father will be glad to see you in his solitary confinement.'

'Is he ill ?' George asked with concern.

'No : he is not ill ; but he is very likely to become ill,' said Genevieve, proceeding to explanations.

'I think that very likely the delay is to be accounted for by the fact you mentioned just now,' she added, 'the fact that there is a shooting party at Yarrell Croft. I say accounted for, but not excused ; though I agree with my father that there is nothing but thoughtlessness behind it.'

George Kirkoswald did not reply. An instant conviction had struck him that there was more than thoughtlessness underlying the affair.

He seemed to have been prepared for the thing he had heard ; to be prepared for more, though certainly he could not have told why he had anticipated ill results from such an exceedingly natural and common circumstance as the giving of a commission for a picture.

Long afterwards he knew that he anticipated ill from the beginning. Now he was not sure that he foresaw only ill. There might be a clashing of elements that would leave the air clearer. It might even be that already he saw a faint gleam upon the distant sea of darkness over which he had looked so long, and so patiently, always waiting for the gleam, always feeling that it had been promised to him if he would wait.

The garden scene was on the easel. The ancient archway was completed. The ivy that covered the pillars threw out wild, careless sprays; the clematis on the trellis was in its summer stage of creamy, profuse blossoming. Beyond the archway there was the old fountain, the interwoven rose-sprays, some tall, waving grasses. The whole space of the foreground in front of the gateway, with the exception of the path, was one mass of graceful, luxuriant, many-tinted flowers. Some of these Bartholomew had painted on the spot, choosing the few weeks during which Miss Richmond had been at Danesborough to make his excursions to Yarrell; otherwise he had intended to make an autumn scene. He was glad now of the summer flowers, the white Madonna lilies, the crimson Martagon lilies, the great Auratum and Japanese lilies. On the left, some late purple and amber irises stood among the broad green leaves; the tall pale-blue larkspur—Yarrell Croft was famous for larkspurs—stood towering against creamy bushes of syringa. There were poppies here, foxgloves there, with quaint campanulas and tufted meadow-sweet. Some of these were only indicated as yet, and closer examination showed that the leafier portion of the work needed many a long hour of patient labour.

'You ought certainly to send this to the Academy,' George said. 'There is an originality about it that could not fail to make its mark.'

'Perhaps Mr. Richmond may choose to send it,' replied the artist, turning to his work again, and beginning, with a careful hand, to touch some of the iris leaves with sunlight.

Genevieve was working at her embroidery, trying to copy some of the poppies in the painting on to a panel that she was embroidering for a screen.

'It is like having perpetual summer beside one,' she said, looking up at the canvas with unaffected pride. 'If ever I give a commission for a picture, it shall certainly be for a garden of summer flowers.'

Kirkoswald was making a mental note of the remark when there came a tapping at the studio door, Keturah thrusting in her head at the same moment.

'It's Miss Richmond again,' she said in a breathless confidential

another ; and down in the Bight the fisher-folk said openly that their gratitude was due as much to Miss Bartholomew as to the master of Usselby Hall.

That they were grateful, and had all manner of pleasant anticipations, was one of Genevieve's strongest motives for keeping up a brave, bright face before her little world. Another motive was her father's need of her bravery. Only once before in his life had he needed it so much.

All day he had remained in his studio ; the finished picture of Yarrell Croft on one easel before him ; the view of the Priory Garden unfinished on another. He had not touched the latter. Genevieve had set his palette, and prepared his mediums, but he had never moved his hand to touch them.

After a whole, long, silent, unexplained month had passed, Mr. Bartholomew had written a second note to Cecil Richmond. He had used much the same terms as on the first occasion. No word of doubt, of impatience had escaped his pen. He merely begged to remind Mr. Richmond that the picture was finished and awaiting his approval.

Had he not been so unwise as to have written that first note, had he sent the picture home, as he would have done but for his own considerateness, he had avoided all this strange and inexplicable pain. But how could he have foreseen such a turn of affairs as this ?

A second month had all but gone by now. The sound of guns had ceased in the neighbourhood, the heather had bloomed and was fading, and Bartholomew had not seen it. Somehow it seemed to this sensitive, nature-loving man, that all his life he would miss that one year's heather.

What if he should have no other chance of seeing the heather in bloom upon the purple hills ?

Beyond doubt in these two months he had grown more apprehensive, more tremulous, more shrinkingly alive to dread, and pain, and evil of every kind. The hours that he should have spent on the moor when the sun was setting, or down by the soothing murmurous sea, where always he had found relief and uplifting, had been spent in his studio. He had sat there surrounded by his work, and the suggestions and associations of work ; and he

'It was not lively,' Genevieve said. 'But for me it was not the great event of the day; that had come before.'

'Of course for you—you are alluding to the Canon's speech?' Miss Richmond said. 'It was beautiful. It comes back to me like an echo every now and then—always just when I can't listen. Then I seem to hate the sound of it, to wish that I had never heard one word that the Canon said. As a rule, I don't remember such things very long. But I remember that. It is curious, isn't it, to remember words like those quite distinctly, and to feel that they have no power over you?'

'I should say that the mere fact of your remembering them proves that they have power,' said Bartholomew.

'Should you?' said Miss Richmond, looking into his gray, weary face with curiosity.

How old the man was seeming! and how shabby and strange he looked! A contemptuous reply had been on her lips, but for once she held herself in check. Was Bartholomew ill? Had some new mental suffering fallen upon him? It was impossible that her small experiment could have anything to do with the change in him—it had been so very small; and, besides, it was over. Some conflict was going on, even now, so it seemed to Miss Richmond, as she sat holding stronger emotions in restraint than anybody dreamed, stronger and stranger. Did she know herself which was hatred that stirred within her, and which was love? She felt isolated as she sat there in the middle of the little group, isolated and defrauded. She told herself that she was not misled by the dark look of pain that was upon Kirkoswald's great square forehead, and in his deep-set eyes. He was happy enough, confident enough, self-satisfied enough. And the pale, yellow-haired girl beside him—what need had she to be so pale, to sit there with that look of sadness and patience about her mouth? They had all they wanted, these two. That letter of hers had had no real effect beyond making them keep their engagement secret for awhile. That was something, but it was not enough, not enough for a wronged and despised woman. She could do more yet—she would do more, she told herself as she sat silently there, resting her chin upon her white, beautiful hand, and looking out with a placid smile. In striking any one of the three

the pictures,' the matter would have been at an end. Had he even written straightforwardly and said, 'I do not now care to have them,' then also there had been no further suspense or pain. Bartholomew could have turned himself to some other work with what strength was left to him. As it was, every day, every hour was adding to the ill that had been wrought in the artist's unstrung and overstrung soul.

Even on this day of the concert he had been unable to rouse himself. Genevieve had sat beside him, she had drawn him to speak out of the overfulness of his heart. Then she had read to him for awhile; and all day she had hoped to win him to consent to go down to Soulsgrif Bight with her in the evening.

She was still trying to persuade him when George Kirkoswald came; he was on his way down to the Bight. It was six o'clock, and nearly dark, but no lamp had been lighted in the studio. 'I am not earning anything to pay for light or fire, or even for the food I eat,' Bartholomew had said just before he had heard George's footstep on the orchard pathway. Then he changed his tone, saying hurriedly, 'Not one word of this to Kirkoswald; and put on the gayest dress you have, if you wish to please me.'

It was hardly possible to put on a very gay dress when nearly three miles of rugged road had to be passed in the late twilight. Yet Genevieve looked very lovely in her pale-blue clinging cashmere gown with its velvet trimmings of the same colour. She went down to the studio when she was dressed; and it could hardly be said that she was disappointed to find that George had not succeeded where she had failed.

'I shall be glad to be alone,' Bartholomew had declared to George Kirkoswald. 'If any note or message should come I shall be here to receive it. There will be no delay. If I were down at the music-room I should be sure that my presence was required here.'

It need hardly be said that Kirkoswald was perplexed—perplexed to the uttermost. To him the conduct of Cecil Richmond seemed simply a cause for annoyance, for irritation at the worst, if anyone were disposed to be irritated by the action of an individual so unimportant. His perplexity did not leave him. All the way down into the Bight he was wondering whether he could do any-

'Ah! that is to escape my criticisms,' she said, putting out her hand with the old, fine, graceful gesture that he knew. 'If you had remained I had some passages ready to be quoted, and also a few that seem to me to need elucidation. Never mind: I shall make you explain them to me another time. . . . Good-bye. They say authors are never appreciated among their own people; but don't forget that you have one appreciative reader.'

The look of annoyance on Kirkoswald's face as he went out was almost amusingly unmistakable.

'I used to think that George was not of what I have heard him term the *genus irritabile*,' said Miss Richmond, using the Christian name with even more than her ordinary deliberateness.

'I am afraid that all people who produce anything—that is, any really creative work—are more or less sensitive about it,' replied Noel Bartholomew.

A pause followed. It was inevitable that Bartholomew should wonder what judgment Diana Richmond had pronounced upon his work, and whether she was about to give expression to her judgment now. Quite unintentionally he had made an opening for her to do so; yet he shrank from her opinion as a man whose eyes have been hurt shrinks from the flare of gaslight. Still, he waited for it.

And Diana knew that he waited for it. It was a little power in her hand, and with the quick instinct that the people seem always to have who find pleasure in giving pain, she divined instantly that the highest refinement of pain would be an absolute silence on the subject. If he spoke, she was prepared; if he did not, she was prepared also. No adverse criticism of hers could fly so straight to its mark as a dead silence. She gave emphasis to it by leaning back a little on the sofa where she sat, and by slowly turning the rings that were upon her hands, as some women do when they sit alone and forget themselves in thought. Was she hesitating because of Genevieve's presence there? The thought struck the girl suddenly, and she felt a little sorry that it came so late.

'You will excuse me?' she said, turning gracefully to Miss Richmond. 'I will look after some tea. Our small handmaiden is not always to be trusted to remember.'

Then she went out, and still Miss Richmond sat silently among

books that came to-day. He was wishing to see you about some magazines.'

George Kirkoswald went away; and Genevieve was left for a few moments alone with Mrs. Gordon. She had a curious sensation of recognition, though she knew that she had not seen the woman nor heard of her before. She was rather puzzled between her refined manners and her helpful ways. She arranged Genevieve's dress, fastened up a stray wave of her yellow hair with wonderful deftness and lightness of touch. A little later she rendered similar services to Mrs. Caton and Mrs. Pencefold, and also to the two Miss Damers. No touch was required to give finish to the appearance of Edil and Ianthe Caton. The tiny creatures stood in their pink silk frocks as if they had just stepped out with their expensive little feet from the latest fashion-book. All the same, they were pretty children, and sweet-tempered.

The terrible moment came at last; Genevieve Bartholomew had not prepared herself for its terribleness. She had never stood on a platform before, never found herself uplifted above a sea of human heads and eyes. It was only a very small sea after all, and there was hardly a face there that she did not know more or less; nevertheless the sense of exposure, of the vainness of all efforts to shrink from it, was very trying. Mr. Severne might be nervous, too, but Genevieve could not help envying him; he seemed so much at home on the platform. He was giving directions here, whispering irrelevant remarks there. The little blue-and-white choir was ranged at the back against the ivy screen. The ladies sat on the right of the platform behind the chrysanthemums. The piano was at the other end, there was a music-stand or two, and a couple of chairs in the middle. Altogether the soft pink light fell upon a very pretty tableau.

The entertainment opened with a four-part song of Mendelssohn's, '*The May-bells and the Flowers*.' It was sung as a glee; and Genevieve played the accompaniment. George Kirkoswald was at some distance from the platform, standing just where he could see the pale blue figure, the white moving hands, the crown of yellow hair. He watched her for awhile, then he sat—

'Holding his forehead to keep off the burr
Of smothering fancies.'

surely that if I were simply happy, with a simple common kind of happiness such as others have, then I might be simply good. . . . And I could do good, too. I could make others happier ; I should desire to do that, and I should have some heart in doing it. . . . You cannot tell how different it would be if I had hope of some day being a little less weary, a little less lonely, a little less unhappy than I have been—than I am.'

'But, surely, in your position,' began the gray, work-worn, care-stricken artist—'surely in your position it is not difficult to be happy! You speak of doing good ; it is in your power to do almost limitless good. You know that as well, or perhaps better, than I know it ; and you must also know the happiness that comes of making others happy. It is a platitude I am saying, perhaps . . .'

'It is a platitude ; it is worse, it is a delusion,' said Miss Richmond. 'And I was not speaking of generalities ; you knew that. If I used vague terms I had a definite meaning, and you knew that too. But you chose to ignore it. . . . You say you are not happy, yet you put happiness away from yourself as if it were not worth having even when it is held out to you.'

There was a pause, a little clatter of tea-cups outside the door ; then Keturah came in, round-eyed, smiling, bringing relief on a tea-tray. But Miss Richmond would not stay for tea. Genevieve came into the room ; Bartholomew went out to see if the carriage was there, and then Diana went away, silently, graciously, magnificently, as she had come.

And she left silence behind her ; but it was a loving, understanding silence. She left disappointment also, to be taken with the dinner of herbs next day, and for many days ; but it was not an uncheerful disappointment. And it had its lesson. The teaching of that time bore fruits of insight and sympathy after many days.

down the room ; George Kirkoswald was waiting for the look, for the smile, for the expression of wondering gratitude. He smiled back again. He was very happy for this one hour, happier in that he had tried to make others happier ; and had, in a measure at least, succeeded.

What is there in the music of the violin that makes it strike so much more readily and surely straight to the human heart than any other music ? It would seem as if its strings had a humanity of their own, a suffering, pleading, haunting humanity. Its cries linger on your ear, its appeals melt you, its soft singing and sighing tranquillizes you in moments when the aggressive tones of a piano would drive you to distraction.

All this Wilfred Stuart understood ; and it seemed, too, as if he understood his audience. The most ignorant of the people sat entranced, and tears were seen dropping slowly over furrowed cheeks. A minute or two later and broad smiles broke under the tears, while big sea-boots kept time to the tune of ' Weel may the keel row,' and ' There's nae luck about the hoose.' This at any rate was comprehensible, and to be understood by the meanest. The house had been brought down at last.

The next item on the programme was Genevieve's song. She had never thought of it since she came on to the platform, and she was as much overcome by her surprise as if she had never had the smallest intention of singing it. She went forward quite mechanically. Mr. Severne put the music into her hand ; Mrs. Caton sat down to the piano, and struck the opening notes boldly.

It was Mrs. Browning's song, *The Mask*, that Genevieve had undertaken to sing. The prelude is brief. Genevieve was hardly ready. She had to make a great effort to begin the opening lines—

' I have a smiling face, she said,
I have a jest for all I meet.'

But in singing, as in other things, it is the first step that costs, and Genevieve was hardly aware of any further cost. She could not help perceiving that from sheer nervousness she was singing better than usual, that her voice was stronger and freer, and had a fuller range. She did not look toward the place where George

‘But you would rather I did not ask?’

The girl hesitated.

‘You know that silence is not congenial to me?’ she said, looking into his face rather pleadingly. ‘That is, silence between you and me. I have never kept anything from you before, you believe that?’

‘I believe that—nay, more than that, I believe that it is a pain to you now. I am certain there is pain somewhere. I want to save you from it, that is all.’

‘But if I would rather endure it, if I have a strong reason for wishing to endure it a little longer, you will not be angry?’

‘No ; I will not be angry.’

There was a mildness about this reply that had a meaning of its own, a meaning that had to be suffered.

‘I hardly meant that, father,’ Genevieve said presently. ‘How could I, since you have never been angry with me in my life? . . . I meant, will you still trust me?’

‘Of course, my child, I trust you. And what is equally to the point, I trust Kirkoswald also,’ said the artist, speaking with some fervency.

The girl rose, and bent over the gray wan face that was so intent upon the white lilies. Was there a tear behind the kiss that she gave?

‘You may trust him, my father ; you may trust him. I have promised to trust him always. . . . There, that is a confession. It is all I have to confess.’

‘Not quite all, little one,’ the artist said with a quiver in his voice. ‘Not quite all. He cares for you, that I know, that I have seen—he cares intensely. And you care for him ; that, also, I think I have perceived. But I want to know one thing, I will ask only one ; do you care enough for him to feel that he can make you happy?’

‘If he cannot, then I cannot be made happy. If this world holds any happiness for me apart from the happiness you make for me, then he has the key of it. I care so much as that ; will that content you?’

‘If you are contented, my darling, if I know that I may leave you contented and happy when I go, then I shall live out my own

Abbas had been passed, and the last parting word said there, did he feel able to breathe as freely as he wanted to breathe. He walked on quite silently for awhile; Genevieve, walking by his side, was silent too.

He thanked her for her silence presently, adding, with a touch of humour, 'And all the while I know you are, as young ladies sometimes say, dying of curiosity.'

'No; I shall never die of curiosity,' Genevieve replied. 'All the same, "I want to know." But first I must congratulate you.'

'Upon what felicity?'

'The felicity of neatness. You have managed your little surprise admirably.'

'And you are satisfied?'

'I am satisfied.'

'And you give me credit for obedience?'

'Implicit obedience.'

'It was perhaps more implicit than you know. You remember the day on which you saw Wilfred Stuart, and your injunctions to me?'

'Distinctly.'

'If I was fortunate enough to find him, I was to take him to Usselby Hall.'

'Did I say that?'

'You said much more than that. I was to do to him as I would to you.'

'I remember. And by way of complying you have made him—what exactly have you made him? Music-master to Soulsgrif Bight? Curator? Librarian? Professor of things in general?'

'All these.'

'Then certainly you have not done to him as you would have done to me. I could never have undertaken tasks requiring such varied ability. . . . Is he equal to your desires?'

'More than equal, especially so far as his music is concerned. He is a pupil of Joachim's.'

'A pupil of Joachim's! And found playing by the roadside!' exclaimed Genevieve.

'Even so. But that was the first day that he had played by the roadside, and I think it will be the last, poor fellow! . . . He owes all to you.'

ribbon all about it ; and when the feather in her hat lost its curl, she filled the brim with scarlet rowan-berries and fronds of fern.

This afternoon she had put on a pretty white muslin cap of her own making, fastening a knot of rose-hips and a bit of green myrtle in the front of it. Another knot of red berries adorned the front of her dress, which was of white blanket-serge. She had taken a little extra pains because of the happiness that seemed to be floating about the studio since that conversation in the morning ; and her father had given her an extra kiss for her care. Nevertheless she was a little conscious of her rustic decorations when the Canon went in.

‘ Altogether, I feel to-day as if old Winter were trying to persuade me that he is as charming as any spring,’ the Canon said, being careful not to make his compliment too personal. He was relieved ; and relief is a thing very apt to effervesce and overfill the cup of satisfaction.

Mr. Severne was admiring the garden-scene, which Genevieve was explaining to him. Bartholomew had done painting for the day, the light of the November afternoon no longer serving his purpose. And he was glad to rest, glad to sit and talk with a friend awhile. It was the best thing that could come to him in life now. If any change came to him, if, for instance, Genevieve should leave him, then he would go and live a little nearer to Thurkeld Abbas ; so that he could drop in at the Rectory whenever the loneliness that would come upon him should turn to heartache. He had said this to himself before ; and he thought of it again now as he drew a wide arm-chair to the fire for the old man, and stirred the coal into a blaze. The flames went up, crackling, rejoicing. The warmth spread outward, mingling with fine sympathies ; quiet, strong yearnings ; low-toned utterance of the ebb and flow of thought.

The conversation came round to the artist’s own affairs presently ; but the Canon only touched lightly upon them, seeing it was not required of him that he should do more. ‘ And it is all mistaken, this rumour, this gossip ?’ the old man said. ‘ I am glad of it, more glad than I can tell you.’

‘ I do not know all that has been said, of course,’ Bartholomew

his violin from the window of the house they lived in into the street; some passers-by picked him up senseless. The whole history is, unhappily, commonplace enough in its outlines; but I fancy there has been capacity for an uncommon amount of suffering under it. It is no wonder that the lad seems as if he could never be reconciled with the world again.'

'Does he care for his mother?' Genevieve asked.

'He seems to care passionately.'

'Then he will soon be reconciled.'

There was a pause. Keturah passed in the clear blue darkness with a seafaring cousin. 'I wonder if she is happy—quite happy?' Genevieve was thinking to herself. She could not help thinking also of her own poor, crushed, and broken love—broken in seeming if not in truth.

She was as far as ever from understanding the turnings and driftings of her fate. She only knew that when she was strongest, lightest-hearted, there was always most hurt and pain underneath.

Her one care was to hide the pain; so that George Kirkoswald may be forgiven if sometimes he doubted whether any deep pain existed. This was only sometimes; at other times he hoped that there was no under-current, that Genevieve's faith was as strong as she had declared it to be—strong enough, at least, for peace. His full conviction was that she would not have to bear the test much longer.

So far she had borne it splendidly; this he would always remember. He had expected it of her; but, nevertheless, he had seen his expectations fulfilled always with a new admiration, a new reverence for a nature so wide, so clear-sighted, so utterly unselfish.

No look of fretfulness, of doubt, had ever met him; never by a glance had any egotistic claim been betrayed. The expression of her face, the tones of her voice, said always, 'I love you, I have faith in you, and, though I do not understand you, I am trying to wait patiently until you can make yourself understood.'

This had been her attitude. It was her attitude still, and by its very uneagerness it added intensity to the things he was already enduring. A little it baffled him, a little it drew him to look into its nature, as if he would seek some more certain satisfaction for

Surely all lives are not suited to disclosure, not even when it is a friend who does the anatomizing !

‘Some of them may dread the truth being known,’ said Bartholomew. ‘But for myself I have more pity for those of whom the truth never can be told in its integrity ; and who know that it never can. They live marred lives ; and the world looks on disapprovingly, not knowing what it is that mars and hinders, and perhaps inventing some stupid, blind theory to account for what it cannot comprehend. . . . I wished once to take the biographer’s pen in hand myself—that was years ago. I had a strong desire to tell the story of a friend of mine, a young artist named David Elseker.’

‘Elseker ! I know the name,’ said Canon Gabriel ; ‘and I think I know where there are two or three small pictures of his—landscapes. To the best of my belief they hang at Kingsworth Hall, near Bristol. They used to interest me ; and I have wondered that so little should be known of the artist.’

‘Nothing more will ever be known of him now,’ said Bartholomew. ‘It is fifteen years since he died ; he died at the age of thirty-four ; and his death depressed me for weeks. I had watched him from the time he was twenty years old. He was a clerk then in the custom-house at Deeaphaven ; and I tried hard to persuade him to stick to the desk, but it was quite in vain. He used to look at me with his quiet blue eyes as if I had struck him an undeserved blow. When he did come to London to begin his career as an artist, I tried to help him as a matter of course, but he needed very little help of mine. He was doing well, wonderfully well, when the news came that his father had died suddenly, and I did not see him for a long time after that. When I did see him again I hardly knew him, he was so shattered, so careworn, so utterly broken. But all the old fire was there, burning away in his keen blue eyes as fast as ever, consuming him, one might say, and say it without exaggeration. He had given up his London studio. He had gone back to Deeaphaven, and he was working there, endeavouring, as an artist and as a teacher of drawing, to support a household of six persons—his mother, his three sisters, himself, and a servant. He was only seven-and-twenty then ; but he looked at least ten years older, and no wonder.

'I ought to have told you all long ago,' George said passionately. 'I ought to have told you of all my life. It would have been so easy once. Then it was made impossible, or I thought it was. Some day—I pray it may be soon—it will be possible again; and then there shall not be a passage in my life that I will not lay bare before you. You shall know everything. I have had a lesson.'

They had reached the cottage now. The barley was standing dark and still on either hand. A bird flew out from the ivy that was round the porch.

'Wait a moment,' said George, taking the hand that Genevieve had laid upon the little railing. 'Only a moment. It is so hard to go when one is happy!'

'You are happier to-night?' Genevieve said softly. In her heart there was a little wonder, a strong wish. Why could he not always be happy? Why should he entertain these moods, these silences and darknesses that came upon him, and remained so persistently? It was not difficult to take things, even bitter things, with a certain 'sweet reasonableness' of outer expression that always helped the inner life of the soul.

'Yes; I am happier,' George was saying. 'I should always be happy if I were near you. It is another atmosphere, and I am another man. You draw me upward. I believe only in good when I am with you.'

'Then you believe in good always. . . . I am always with you,' said the girl, with a deeper and more passionate meaning in her tone and in her accent than the words might seem to hold. She would have said more, but it seemed as if her voice failed in the effort. Her emotion was stronger and deeper than she could bear. But surely that impulse toward further unfoldings was not difficult of comprehension!

glad. But I have often wished that the world could have known but a little of the truth, the world that misjudged him, that slandered him when his heart was aching within him, that crushed him with its hardness while he was bearing burdens too heavy to be borne, that turned a cold face toward him because of his apparent failure while he was suffering something that was almost martyrdom in his craving for a chance of achievement. . . . That is David's story. It would stand for the experience of many another, doubtless ; and you will agree with me in saying that the truth, if it could be spoken, would have but little terror for such as he.'

There was a pause while the Canon reflected.

'No,' he said presently ; 'no, your friend would probably not have feared the truth ; but I think he would have been one of those meant by a recent writer, "those whose tongues have often faltered and been dumb from very eagerness of passion, and dread lest any words, even the best, should spoil their story." You seem to regret your inability to write out fully and plainly all that you discerned. Believe me, it is better unwritten. It would not interest. Men as a rule shun the records of failure ; while no book is so popular as the book that tells of a great success in life. . . . But the little you have said is hardly more than a side-light flashed upon your friend's fate. You have spoken of his broken career rather than of himself.'

'I have nothing to say of himself. I did not know him. He was hidden under the clouds, one always felt that. Sometimes I could not help speculating on what he might have been. It is certain that he would have been kindly, human, helpful, patient, since he managed to be these at the worst. Under other circumstances it is probable that he might have had distinction among men, that he might have talked brilliantly, for instance, or acted effectively, or lived his life with a certain *éclat*, as some of our modern Art-princes are doing now. . . . I know what you would say, these things are not the highest. That is true ; and he did not aim at them, not for a moment ; of that I am certain. He aimed at nothing save the doing of the work that it was in him to do. The rest might have followed, or it might not ; it would not have mattered, so that his life-work was done. Still, from the highest

eye was arrested by some picture, some group of fine ornaments, some display of rich and rare lace, or china, or embroidery. It might be that the only harmony was the harmony of universal magnificence, but that is by no means to be despised if it be free from any too obvious discord.

There was no discord there. Miss Richmond herself, though it was but mid-day, was dressed with an extreme elegance. She had on a cashmere morning robe with a Persian pattern on it; fine muslin ruffles were round her throat and wrists; her small slippers were embroidered. On her head there was a curiously-shaped black velvet cap, which she was trying on for the first time. It was the production of her new French maid, *Félicie*, who stood beside her mistress looking into the glass that reflected the beautiful face with its dark overshadowing of purple-black hair and its deep-set, lustrous eyes. Few women so far past their first youth could have borne the morning light as Miss Richmond bore it—a fact of which she was very well aware.

‘And you think it suits me, *Félicie*? It is not too large?’ Diana was saying.

‘Non, madame. Le chapeau n’est pas trop grand. Il sied parfaitement à madame.’

‘And you think it looks better as it is? We thought of having the band embroidered, you know.’

‘Mais il va mieux comme ça. De la broderie? non. Quand il sera brodé, il perdra son cachet. Il est superbe comme il est, porté par madame; et——’

But *Félicie* did not finish her sentence. The door of the room was thrown wide open with a bang, and Cecil Richmond rushed in with a burning spot on each of his pale cheeks, and an open letter in his hand. Seeing that *Félicie* was there, he made a sudden effort to control himself.

‘Leave the room,’ he said to the girl, speaking as quietly as he could. ‘I wish to see Miss Richmond alone.’

The latter sentence was addressed to his sister rather than to her maid.

Diana seated herself in the low easy-chair she had been sitting in before *Félicie* disturbed her. She was careful about arranging the lace at the back of it; she considered that lace was always

waited upon his lightest wish with the patience and gentleness of a gentle woman. It was almost worth while to have been ill, since illness wrought an experience of human loving-kindness that it would be good to remember while life should last.

It was no wonder, then, that the long letter was all broken and disjointed, that it should seem to have been written out of much weariness and perplexity. 'Yet I could not refrain from writing,' George said. 'It is nearly four o'clock a.m. Warburton is sleeping the sleep of recovery. The fire is burning low; every now and then a great shower of hail comes rattling down the chimney, and upon the window-pane. It is just the sort of night when one cannot help "looking before and after," and certainly "pining for what is not." All night the stillness has seemed empty and hollow, and any sound that broke the lamp-lit silence outside has seemed like a note of wild unrest. I think I have never before had such an impatient desire to be back again in the pine-woods, to hear the sighing of the wind among the fir-tree tops, and the surging of the waves down in Soulsgrif Bight. That reminds me to ask if Miss Bartholomew will be good enough to look in upon Mrs. Gordon some fine day? I am anxious to know if the poor woman is feeling less miserable; if she has less dread of being discovered; and I shall also be glad to know that her son is looking stronger. Please tell him that I have selected a number of new books, and as soon as Warburton is better we are going to look out some views to be exhibited by limelight. Of course I expect to be back again for the next concert. I think Severne said he had arranged it for the 23rd. Yes, certainly I must be back again before that time. It is long enough to have to look forward. I have thought myself not too happy at Usselby of late, and, indeed, I have had reasons for thinking so; but I know now that it was happiness to be there—greater happiness than I can know anywhere else. And it will be greater than it has been. No experience weakens my hope of that.'

So the letter went on, aimless, discursive, as letters always are when the people who write them keep just outside everything they are longing most to say. If George might have added a postscript for Genevieve, bidding her read between the lines of this ineffective writing, then perhaps he would have been happier,

'Where are they, may I ask?'

'I put them into the fire.'

The sudden flush of crimson seemed to spread from the burning spots on the young man's cheek over his entire face and throat and head. He stood silently. He appeared to have a dread of himself—of some wild, unmeasured strength within himself.

'What was your motive?' he asked, still speaking with as little agitation as he could use.

Miss Richmond smiled slowly, incomprehensibly, irritatingly.

'My dear boy, you have never yet understood any motive of mine,' she said. 'You certainly could not understand this. Give it up.'

'If I give it up, either you or I must leave Yarrell Croft.'

'You have said so before.'

'I have, more than once.'

'And more than once you have come to see that it would not be convenient to either of us to leave.'

'One has to consider more than one's convenience. Is it convenient to me to have my letters opened, and read, and burned without my knowledge? You have said and done many intolerable things. I think you have touched the limit at last. . . . What can I say to this man? What excuse can I make?'

'Why not tell him the truth?'

'I don't believe you would care if I did.'

'Of course I should not care. I should rather enjoy it.'

Again Cecil stood silent, baffled, discomfited.

'Do you know the sort of reputation you are making for yourself in the neighbourhood?' he asked at last, looking down into the face before him with less of passion and more of pain than had been there before.

'No,' answered Miss Richmond, with animation; 'no, I do not. It is always interesting to hear what people are saying about one, and it is an interest of which I have never had my due share. If you know anything, Cecil dear, do tell me!'

'It would have no effect.'

'Pardon me, I have just said that it would have the effect of interesting me.'

and I love you enough to know that I can read the writing when it is held down to me. . . . If I read it I shall obey it ; I shall not fail.'

A ray of sunlight shone out between the clouds ; a kind, good face, all smiles and premature blushes, passed the window in haste. It was Mr. Severne, and Genevieve was smiling in response even as he entered the room.

'I—I asked you if I might come in the forenoon, you know,' he said, speaking even more nervously than usual. 'I know you are always busy ; but you didn't say I mightn't come. . . . Is Mr. Bartholomew out this fine morning ?'

'No ; he is in the studio. We will go to him. But is it a fine morning ? I thought it was so cold, so dull till just now ?'

'Yes, till just now. The sun shone out exactly as I was getting over the stile, and I took it for a good sign. I couldn't help doing that, you know. I always like the sun to shine out like that when—well, when I am doing anything important.'

'Is it an important thing to make a call at Netherbank ?' Genevieve asked. She was already feeling brighter, more genial, because of this genial face and voice that she had come to like so much. She was trying to stir the fire into an appearance of greater hospitality. Perhaps it would be better not to disturb her father in the middle of his morning's work. Mr. Severne was talking, meanwhile, rather glad of the noise that Genevieve was compelled to make.

'Yes,' he said, 'it has always been an important thing to me to come to Netherbank. I remember the first time that I came ; I was awfully nervous about it. And you *were* good ! I was laughing away like anything in about two minutes, and had forgotten all about my dread. I never met anybody who had the art of putting people at their ease as you have.'

'I thank you,' said Genevieve, smiling. 'Then, will you be quite at ease now ? Will you sit there, please ? I am going to work at my embroidery a little, since you are here to talk to me, or read to me, or sing to me. I never touch my needle now when I am alone. I am not happy enough for that.'

Mr. Severne laughed. 'Well, that is puzzling !' he said.

'Is it ? It need not be. Needlework doesn't occupy one's

Kirkoswald—that she had never cared much for anyone. Affection was not in her way. She seemed, more than any woman he knew, to be capable of living her own life without support from any other life. There was nothing of feminine softness or subjection about her ; nothing that seemed like need of protection, of any guiding or guarding influence. In all things she was self-sufficient, and equal to the emergency of the hour.

He was utterly at a loss now, and it could hardly be expected of him that he should take an annoyance like this quite meekly and quietly, and without making any further effort to arrive at the mystery involved in it. The more he considered his perplexity the harder it was to bear. He hazarded another question after a time.

‘At least answer me this,’ he said. ‘Was it your intention simply to annoy me? or have you some spite against Bartholomew?’

‘I had no special wish to annoy you,’ replied Diana considerately. ‘And I have no spite, as you term it, against your artist. He is probably a fool ; but if one felt spitefully toward all the fools one meets, one would have no room for any other feeling.’

Cecil turned away, pained, indignant, still baffled.

‘May I ask, then, what you are going to do?’ Miss Richmond said, as he opened the door of the room.

‘I cannot tell you what I am going to do,’ was the reply. ‘I shall have to consider.’

‘Do consider—consider well!’ said Diana, rising to her feet, and facing her brother with new meaning in her expression. ‘I am speaking for your good now. Be cautious ; especially, I would say, be cautious if you are likely to require any further favours at my hands.’

Cecil remained standing there, changing colour quickly as he stood. He understood the threat. Young as he was, he had long ago placed himself in his sister’s power. He was aware that she had but lately discovered some debts of his that he had not confided to her when he had professed to make a full confession concerning the state of his affairs. That was when he came of age, and found to his intense disappointment that it would take some years of careful management and retrenchment to make him the

her hand. It was trembling ; her eyes were full of tears. 'If it make any change, it will be a change toward greater friendliness, a better understanding. And I think—let me say it, though it may seem harsh just now—I think that you will understand yourself better. You will find that it is a sister's love you want from me, a sister's care, a sister's friendliness. You miss these ; I have always felt that—that you were missing your home sympathies. Then try to think that this is home. Come more often, and talk more freely on any subject you will. It will be better so ; we shall forget this sooner.'

'But I shall not want to forget,' said Mr. Severne, lifting his grave blue eyes ; and Genevieve saw that there was a new light in them, a new power. Whatever pain had struck him, the force of it had turned to spiritual strength even as it fell. 'I shall not want to forget. There will be no sorrow in it by-and-by ; that is, not much, not if you will be just the same to me, and try to care for me, as you say, as a sister would care. . . . I shall be very happy. . . . But I should like to know that you were a little happier too.'

'And I shall be ; believe that. I am not so—so self-sufficing as I used to be,' said Genevieve, remembering and growing sadder. 'Only this morning when you came I was feeling lonely, and I was glad to see you—very glad.'

'Were you?—were you really ? . . . But I can't be of any use,' said Mr. Severne, his voice dropping to a more despondent tone. He could not help having his own thoughts about things. If Mr. Kirkoswald were at the root of Miss Bartholomew's unhappiness, he could have no hope of being helpful in such a matter as that. He could only stand ready—a little on one side, but always so that he could be ready when the moment came. He had an instinctive feeling that the moment would come—the moment when he might be of use, when he could put all that pure, unselfish love of his into some small act that nobody would notice. Perhaps Genevieve might notice it. If she did, she would offer him thanks—sweet thanks, with sweet smiles ; but she would never know. No, she would never know all that her words of that day had meant to him. All the way as he went home, with his heartache and his sense of failure, he was picturing to himself his future life, his

It would be easier to explain away anything that might be said by Sharpe, than the words of a deliberately-written communication.

CHAPTER XLIII.

DEAD WOODBINE.

'All my life I still have found,
And I will forget it never,
Every sorrow hath its bound,
And no cross endures for ever.'

Lyra Germanica.

GENEVIEVE will always remember that October evening. She was sitting beside her father in the studio; sitting quite silently. The fire was burning low; the lamplight threw dim rays among the easels and canvases; the wind was sweeping sadly over the fields, moaning in the chimney and through the casements. Some dead creepers were tapping plaintively upon the window-pane; the sound was as if some lost creature were craving help—admittance. Bartholomew sat with his face buried in the hands that rested upon the table. For more than an hour he had not spoken.

Presently a knock at the studio-door awoke him from his reverie. It was certainly surprising. Few people came to the studio; none came so late.

A sudden feeling that was more like fear than anything else surged over him as he opened the door. When he saw that it was Ambrose Sharpe his fear changed to a new despondency.

'Come in,' he said to the man, who was murmuring something unintelligibly out there in the darkness. 'Come in. . . . There is only my daughter here. . . . You were saying something?'

'It's the picture—Mr. Richmond's picture,' said Ambrose, who had heard about it, and had also gathered in the village that there was something in the affair not easy of comprehension. It was quite well known that the painting had been finished for more than two months, and that Mr. Bartholomew had been daily expecting its removal. Ambrose was a little pleased with his errand.

'It's the picture,' he said. 'Mr. Richmond told me to take it

'Yes, my father, I have sold them. What will Mrs. Caton say?'

'It will hardly matter about Mrs. Caton,' the artist replied bitterly. Then he tried to recover himself, or to seem as if he did.

'Does Mrs. Caton represent the world for you now?' he asked, speaking in a gentler and more natural way.

'Yes, to a certain extent. She seems to have her hand on the pulse of it very finely. But since she interprets it, it cannot, after all, be such a very evil world. If she knew that I had sold my lily-panel, and had received something like fourpence-farthing an hour for my work, with the materials thrown in, she would begin to be good to me from that very moment.'

'You think she would pity you?'

'There is a pity which is akin to love!'

'And there is a pity which is akin to contempt.'

'So there is, father; and happy are the people who need no pity at all,' Genevieve said, trying bravely to keep the sadness out of her face. 'Perhaps we shall not need it always, and if we should, we will try to bear it. . . . Shall I sing to you a little while you sit there?' she continued, placing a chair for him by the fire, and opening the piano. 'Shall I sing you the song that Enid sang in the day of her broken fortune? I will be Enid, and you shall be Earl Yniol.

"Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with smile or frown;
With that wild wheel we go not up or down;
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.
Smile and we smile, the lords of many lands;
Frown and we smile, the lords of our own hands;
For man is man and master of his fate."

Genevieve sang on to the end of the song resolutely, but she was grieved for the expression of her father's face, for the quiver of his lip. She had not known that he had looked at the cheque, knowing that he looked upon an answer to a passionate, half-despairing prayer, prayed in the night while she was sleeping. It was an answer—an answer granted with a special and unlooked-for trial in the very granting. Such answers come to us all at times, baffling the heart that yearns only to be grateful, to understand its own gratitude. Like other trials, it is a trial of faith, and

ill. . . . And I think there is some other oppression, something that I do not penetrate, or understand. I cannot feel as if it were all over.'

They went out into the silent night. The wind swept by in gusts, the clouds were passing swiftly across the stars, the dead leaves rustled in the breeze. Mingled with these sounds Genevieve seemed all night to hear the forlorn tapping of the dead, melancholy woodbine upon the studio window-pane.

CHAPTER XLIV.

'BY A CORN-FIELD SIDE, A-FLUTTER WITH POPPIES.'

'A nature o'er-endowed with opposites,
Making a self alternate, where each hour
Was critic of the last, each mood too strong
For tolerance of its fellow in close yoke.'

GEORGE ELIOT: *The Spanish Gipsy*.

IF the corn in the fields be ever so scant, there is a little gladness about the harvest-time, a little mirth, much picturesqueness, an odour of old associations. In some of these far-away northern districts the reapers yet reap with sickles, as they did in the days of Boaz; and the maidens follow after the reapers as the maidens were following when Ruth came timidly into the barley-fields, and when,

'Sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn.'

Dorothy Craven's barley-field at Netherbank had been partly cut; the reapers were still at work at the upper end of the field, though the sun was already dropping over the edge of Langbarugh Moor. The young men and maidens moved in front of the tall barley that was yet standing, waving its pale gold against the dark tones of the upland. Bessy Skirlaugh, in a scarlet shawl that glowed in the last amber ray, was turning the corn lightly on to the bands that her seven-years-old Hannah was twisting; two young men were tying; Mark Ossett and his boy Willie were setting up the sheaves, 'stooking' was the word they used; and

Sir Galahad was saying, looking up with the wistful light that had never gone from his face since '*that day*,' as he called it in his own mind. He had not spoken of it—he would never speak of it. Genevieve had no fear; she had only a little sorrow, only a great regard. Nay, it was more than regard; it was love, and he knew that it was love. Some day perhaps it would satisfy him. Meantime, if he were not satisfied, then neither was he sorrowful. The peace that had always been visible in him, visible through all his blushes and mistakes, his smiles, his hesitations, his awkwardnesses, was more than ever visible now; and Canon Gabriel seemed to watch his face with a great tenderness. He knew what had happened, and Noel Bartholomew knew it too; but it was Sir Galahad himself who turned all regret, all embarrassment into simple, quiet, open acquiescence.

'It is good of you to let me come, and to be so kind to me,' he said to Mr. Bartholomew, as he shook hands and went out into the dull wintry weather that was upon land and sea.

The picture was sent home that same evening. Sharpe took it, with Keturah's brother, Johnny Glead, to help him. Very little emotion went with this second and larger work. There could be no pleasure connected with it, with the idea of its reception, its appreciation.

The inevitable exhaustion followed upon the completion of the picture. There was nothing to be done but some patient waiting, which is often the hardest task a human being can have. It was very hard in this instance, so hard that the father and daughter began to count the hours of every day almost as anxiously as they counted the few shillings that were left to them. No word passed the lip of either concerning the master of Yarrell Croft. He had again sent a message—a message precisely similar to the one he had sent before. 'Mr. Richmond said I was to tell you that he liked the picture very well.' That was all. Bartholomew looked into his daughter's face when he heard it, with a look that was curiously mingled and confused. There was wonder in it, and amusement, with a little disdain, and not a little hopelessness. The girl's lip quivered.

'We shall always know better now how it is with the poor, father,' she said with a faint pain in her tone.

'But after the thunderstorm how good it is !'

'Yes, it is good for the man who escapes the lightning stroke.'

What was he dreading? Genevieve wondered. Was his poverty a greater trouble to him than she knew? She thought she knew the worst. Only that morning, giving her a small sum for Keturah's wages, he had smiled and said gravely that his purse was like the widow's cruse, in that it never quite failed; but she knew that more than once it had all but failed, and, sadder still, she also remembered that more than once she had missed small treasures from the studio, and had guessed how they had been packed up and sent away in her absence. It was a terrible strait,—its full terribleness being something not to be openly acknowledged even between themselves. It would have been an added pang had they known that it was much more openly spoken of in Murk-Marishes, and in the hamlets beyond. Keturah's friends made no mystery of the growing narrowness and straitness of things at Netherbank, and the neighbourhood was curious about the smallest matters that happened there now. It was interesting to see a stately princess with a fine smile, with golden hair, and cashmere dresses, and Gainsborough hats, and to be impelled to wonder how long it was since she had had a good dinner.

The message brought by Mrs. Sharpe had its depressing as well as its amusing side. It was evident to Noel Bartholomew that he need expect no other message, and therefore no payment, until the second picture was finished and sent home. He would take care about sending this one home. There should be no invitation to Mr. Richmond to come and approve of his work this time. All the same, Bartholomew said to himself, that so far as his best skill could insure his success, there should be no room for disapproval. He knew himself to be working with more heart at this second picture; it was promising better, and it offered more scope for imaginative work. George Kirkoswald, seeing it, expressed positive delight, and he was not given to idle exuberance of admiration.

It was not quite a week after the view of Yarrell Croft had been sent home when George came down. He had not heard of its removal, and nothing was told even to him of the manner in which Bartholomew's three letters had been responded to at last.

almost seemed as if the dull wind-swept sky itself had a ponderousness that could be felt. The air was heavy and chill ; the dead grasses that were whitening in the hedgerows bent and shivered to the breeze ; the great gray sea swept across the bay from point to point in wild ceaseless unrest. The day seemed full of sadness, of unhopefulness, and the harsh boding scream of the sea-gulls wheeling beyond the edge of the cliffs struck cruelly upon the ear when the hands were stretched out supplicatingly to Nature for a little comfort, a little soothing, a little promise for the days to be.

There were only a few people about in the Bight. One or two were looking out anxiously over the rocky beach to the north. The tide was rising. Right across where the white edges of the waves gleamed against the dark cliffs there was a solitary figure, a woman's figure, apparently.

'Were they watching her? Was there any fear?' Bartholomew asked of an ancient mariner who was leaning over the edge of the quay.

'Noä, sir, there's nought to be feared,' said the man, 'not unless she worsens on't. . . Ya'll be knawin' wheä it is? Ya'll ken it's Ailsie Drewe?'

'Ailsie !—It is Ailsie!' Genevieve exclaimed; then she hesitated, fearing to ask the question that was upon her lip.

But the old man needed no questioning. He had all the eagerness of his class to be the first to tell a tale of sadness. This was sad enough, and it was also a little strange.

'It is like as if we'd all on us expected it,' the old man said, 'knawin' 'at Ailsie was expectin' it neet an' daäy, an' leuked out for t' poästman ivery mornin', storm or no storm, wiv a feäce as white as driven snaw. She niver kind o' settled te nought till t' poästman had turned his back te goä up t' bank yonder. An' then ten daäys ago she had a dreäm. She says it warn't no dreäm, but she were wakkened out of her sleep wiv a plash o' water, an' a great sudden light 'at she said was no shine o' the sun, nor o' the moon, but were a great sea-shine, an' a boät far out upon it wi' little Davy an' his father makkin' for some hills 'at were all aglow wi' the light 'at struck up oot o' the sea. . . . Ah saäy myself 'at it would ha' been better if she'd niver heerd nought

whisper to Genevieve. 'I showed her into t' sitting-room, an' I told her you'd be comin' in a minute, an' I didn't tell her 'at Mr. Kirkoswald was here.'

Genevieve smiled, but she also blushed quickly. Why did Keturah think that it mattered about Miss Richmond knowing who was there? She saw that George had heard. There was a change on his face, a tightening of the muscles about his mouth.

'I will go up with you, if I may,' he said; 'I think it will be better.'

And Bartholomew hastened to add that he would follow immediately. Of course Miss Richmond had come to pay for the picture that had been sent home, or, at any rate, to arrange about the payment. The idea struck him with a sudden shame even as it occurred to him. Was this the lesson that poverty was teaching him—this low care, this unworthy eagerness? Had he declined so far in so short a time? He felt with bitterness that the sense of unexpected relief was almost an agitation to him.

Miss Richmond was sitting on the little chintz-covered sofa when Genevieve went in with George Kirkoswald. She had arranged the cushions about her, placed her feet on a footstool, and she sat there holding out a white languid hand, hardly moving her coral-red lips in answer to Genevieve's greeting. She looked at George Kirkoswald with a quite inscrutable look in her eyes; even he could not discern its hidden meaning.

She sat in the same impassive manner when Bartholomew went in a moment or two later. It was as if she had come expecting to be entertained, to have only to sit and watch, sit and listen, sit and judge.

'I expected to find you here,' she said to Kirkoswald, with intentness in her tone. 'That was partly why I came. I have not seen you since that day in Soulsgrif Bight, when you disappeared so suddenly. . . . How was it?'

'How was it that I disappeared? I think it was because I had to see Smartt again,' Kirkoswald replied curtly.

'How inconvenient of Smartt! It must have spoilt your day—your great day,' said Diana with mild superciliousness. 'Think of having to do without your luncheon, the climax, as it were! It fell very flat, I assure you—if that is a consolation. Didn't you consider the luncheon a very flat affair, Miss Bartholomew?'

gave Davy up before, you know, an' then he came back te life. An' Ah'd like to be here when he's given up again. So Ah can't goä an' get the little book now, you see, miss—not till t' tide's over t' Kirkmaister's steäne yonder. Then Ah'll goä.'

And all the while the great white waves were sweeping upward, always upward, leaping and dashing hungrily upon the big brown boulders that stood together in stern resistance at the foot of Soulsgrif Ness.

Genevieve tried to comfort the poor woman a little, but she seemed as one who did not need comfort, as if she did not even hear it. She went on talking to herself, softly, wearily; and in a very little time it seemed as if she had always talked so, always looked out over the sea with eyes that had no vision in them.

Leaving her there, a solitary figure watching and waiting among the dark rocks where the white sea was rushing and sweeping, they went up to the reading-room. There was warmth there and rest and cheeriness. Some half-dozen men and lads of the place were enjoying the unwonted luxury of pictorial newspapers. One or two were deep in unlikely books. Wilfrid Stuart was arranging the platform for the coming concert—it was to be on the next evening but one. There was a decided change in the appearance of the violinist of the cottage-door. He came quickly forward, moving with the help of a stick. There was a smile on his face, the wildness had all but gone from his eyes. It was easy to see that reconciliation had at least begun.

'Mr. Kirkoswald asked us to come in and see how you were getting on,' Bartholomew said; 'but I suppose you will have heard from himself by this time?'

'Yes, I have heard,' said the young man. 'I had a letter this morning with a parcel of books and magazines. I am glad that Mr. Kirkoswald will be here for the concert. . . . Would you like to see the ivy-wreaths that my mother is making?'

she would strike them all, this she knew certainly ; and more modes than one of striking were within her reach now.

All this, and more than this, passed with the swift indefiniteness of thought across her brain. There had been no long pause when she spoke again, turning to George Kirkoswald : ' Do you know I was reading a volume of your poems yesterday ? ' she said, speaking in her usual deliberate and expressive way, a way that made her lightest word seem important.

George started visibly as if he had been stung. ' I am sorry you had no more interesting book,' he replied, trying to seem as unconcerned as might be under this unexpected attack, for such he felt it to be.

' I could have had no book more interesting to me,' Diana said. ' I had half forgotten it. I had entirely forgotten some of the poems. They seemed to strike me in quite a new light—especially some of your ballads, those written in imitation of the ancient ballads. Of course you remember them all ? What a wonderful one that long one is, *The Doom of the False Knight*. It made my blood run quite chill.'

' It makes mine run chill to think of having written it,' said George, adding extenuatingly, ' I was only eighteen years old when I wrote it, if that is any excuse.'

' Eighteen ! Really ! What an interesting boy you must have been,' said Miss Richmond, with a smile that, taken together with the words, roused Genevieve's indignation to the utmost. ' I wish I had known you then—at the time when you were writing such poems as those about false knights, and inconvenient lovers imprisoned in moated castles, and forsaken maidens pining in lofty towers. I am sure you were more interesting then than you were later, when I knew you better.'

Almost George Kirkoswald wished, as he sat there enduring with all the patience he had, that Miss Richmond would as a matter of mercy do the worst that it was in her power to do, then and there.

Unfortunately it had occurred to Diana also that there might be mercy in such a course ; other things occurred to her, and she was in no mood to be merciful. She was decidedly sorry when George Kirkoswald suddenly rose and prepared to depart.

a little surprised by it—more than a little glad. Yet it seemed like another man's work—something with which he had no right to trifle.

Genevieve watched his face as he stood looking into the soft, blue, upturned eyes on the canvas. Her hand was still within her father's arm; when she saw that he was glad she let her cheek rest affectionately upon his shoulder.

'The morning rime is good,' she said with an apparent irrelevance.

'All beauty is good,' replied the artist. 'I wonder when man will surprise the last secret of beauty. We are far from it yet—the best of us.'

'But it is something to be seeking.'

'Yes; it is something. It is much to the man who has found the right clue. Till now I have been wandering on without a clue. Yet even in wandering I trust I did what it was given to me to do.'

Genevieve stood silent a moment; her heart was beating a little, as if she herself was on the verge of discovery of some larger law. . . . Then there came a sound into the silence.

'There—run, dear—that is the postman's horn,' said Bartholomew, with a sudden grayness passing across his face.

Genevieve came back in a minute or two smiling, almost breathless, holding a letter aloft.

'Here is the Richmond crest!' she said. 'A cross *patonce*, azure, between four étoiles; and the Richmond motto—"Fides præstantior auro." Let me be mercenary, and hope that the Richmond cheque is equally imposing!'

Bartholomew's hand trembled in a very evident manner as he took the note. There was no responsive smile on his gray face; no sign of relief. It was characteristic of him that he looked about him for a paper-knife, and cut the envelope with an unusual deliberateness. He read the note silently. Then he sat down, not lifting his eyes to his daughter's face.

'Don't say that the cheque is not there, father!' Genevieve said, coming round to where he sat, and stroking his thin gray hair in a tender, loving way.'

'Read the note, little one,' the father said, handing it to her.

CHAPTER XLV.

'SHALL LIFE SUCCEED IN THAT IT SEEMS TO FAIL?'

'Oh ! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud !
I fall upon the thorns of life ! I bleed !'

SHELLEY : *Ode to the West Wind.*

LESS than a week after Miss Richmond and George Kirkoswald had met at Netherbank, George received a telegram from York ; it was from Mrs. Warburton, the wife of his friend. Her husband had been suddenly taken ill in London. He was there alone, at a strange hotel ; and she herself was too ill to go to him. Within an hour after the receipt of this message George was on his way across the moor to Crosthwaite Station, a small station on a new branch line running direct to Market Studley. He had written a note which old Charlock was to take to Netherbank.

It was a sunny November morning when the note came down. The harvest was gathered at last, all save a few acres of beans that stood blackening on the upland slope here and there. The leafless twigs swayed lightly in the breeze ; a few dull gold leaves were on the beeches ; great white whorls of yarrow flowered in the waste places. It was winter, but winter at its best and mildest.

Noel Bartholomew read the note aloud ; and he could not but see the change on his daughter's face ; the fading colour, the look that was half disappointment, half some keener pain. He worked on a little quite silently, touching the anthers of a white lily with crumbling red gold ; then, at last, he spoke.

'If there was anything that you could tell me, Genevieve, my child, you would tell me without hesitation?' he asked gently.

The quick colour came to the girl's face. She had been standing near the window, looking out over the hedge of bright green holly, where the red berries were clustering and ripening among the leaves. She turned when her father spoke, and came near to where he sat. Her face was full of perplexity ; but she raised her eyes unshrinkingly to his.

'You are meaning with regard to Mr. Kirkoswald?' she said. 'If you ask me to tell you, father, I will tell you all that there is to be told.'

now,' he said. 'I have never before had to contend with circumstances like this, with a nature like this. I am baffled utterly.'

In the end he wrote again to Mr. Richmond, simply explaining that he could not expect to find a purchaser for pictures that were so entirely of the nature of portraiture. Few men would care to buy a matter-of-fact representation of another man's house, another man's grounds. He was sorry to seem disobliging, but he could not do this thing that was asked of him. Then, with a painful effort, he added, 'My present circumstances do not permit of it. And as to reducing the price of the pictures, that would be virtually to admit that I had valued them too highly at first. You are probably aware how far this is from being the fact.'

That was all. The letter was sent to the post, and then again Bartholomew and his daughter set themselves to wait with patience. A new quietness, a new yieldingness seemed to have come down upon the poor fate-torn artist. When the evening came he consented, without hesitation, to go down with his daughter to the music-room.

'I would go if it were only a matter of gratitude, dear,' he said, speaking as lightly and gaily as he might do. 'Think of it—if I had been alone through all this! What should I have done?'

'I don't know what *you* would have done,' replied Genevieve, stroking the thin nervous hand she held, and speaking with a responsive gaiety; 'I don't know what you would have done, since you are a man. A woman would have opened her piano, and would have sung "Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate."'

'And all the while her heart would have been breaking.'

'Sir Walter Scott says that "a woman's heart takes a long time o' breaking."'

'So he does; but he is careful to make the addition, "That's according to the stuff they're made o', sir."'

'Then since mine is made of very strong stuff, I will go and dress. . . . I shall be ready in ten minutes, my father.'

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The wreaths were all in their places—ivy for friendship, laurel for ambition, with here and there a glowing red chrysanthemum, blushing because it must always say, 'I love.' There was some dark yew there also, and a spray or two of cypress. The soft

few days the more happily for knowing it. . . . Kiss me again, child. I shall do some good work to-day.'

Was Genevieve a little relieved also? Canon Gabriel, going over after luncheon with Mr. Severne, found a lightness in the atmosphere that he had not expected to find. Rumours of Bartholomew's unprosperousness had reached him, and pained him; exaggerated stories of the Yarrell Croft pictures had flashed out of a seeming darkness. Then when he had questioned Mr. Severne he had found the curate unwilling to answer, unwilling rather than unable: and this evasiveness had been more suggestive than any disclosures that he could have made.

'I think myself that Mr. Bartholomew is not doing well,' the young man had said with a new gravity in his round blue eyes. But he would not say what made him think so. He was more observant than people knew; and it was not to be expected that his powers of observation should fail him when he went to Netherbank. He had understood the meaning of the few small changes that had been made in the hospitalities of the little household far better than George Kirkoswald had understood them; indeed, it could hardly be said that the latter had noticed them in any particular degree. He was not naturally curious; and being a little beyond the reach of Rumour with her hard eye and malevolent tongue, he had not been aroused to any suspicion.

In excuse for him—if he needs excuse—it may be said that there had been very little at Netherbank to awaken suspicions unawakened elsewhere. One year had not wrought any noticeable change in the dainty arrangements of the little sitting-room; the fresh flowers, or green, graceful leaves were always there; there was no sadness in the canary's song; and the little place bore the searching rays of the afternoon sunshine far better than any of the dusty, shabby rooms at Usselby could bear it. George Kirkoswald had missed nothing from the accustomed brightness and freshness that he appreciated so keenly; and it need hardly be said that he had missed nothing of brightness or freshness in Genevieve herself. She had been a little extra careful in her daintiness, that was all. The cream-coloured laces that she wore had been washed and ironed a little more frequently; if she had a shabby gown she wore a pretty muslin apron with knots of

nothing that was difficult of interpretation. Love can always be read, and faith, and joy—these being simple things and good. It is sorrow that is complex, and mean motive, and evil will.

The concert began with a trio, Mrs. Caton and Miss Damer at the piano, while Wilfrid Stuart played the violin. It was some music of Donizetti's—the overture to *Lucia di Lammermoor*—and it was being played very effectively, so the people thought who were listening, and who were capable of judging. They were not all listening. Genevieve was sitting on a chair, half hidden by the piano, thinking what a curious meeting it had been, meeting hands and meeting glances on a raised platform, with pink lights shining down, and green wreaths whispering fidelity. Agatha Damer was sitting on the other side of her, in a dress of willow-green embroidered with white silk daisies. George Kirkoswald stood behind, between the two chairs, carried away on the quivering notes of the violin, lifted into realms of resolute hoping, determined defying. Quite unknown to himself, his hand had grasped the back of Genevieve's chair—he was grasping it as if he had caught and conquered his life's greatest enemy, overcome his last and most invincible difficulty.

The moment of imagined victory is often the moment of real defeat. George was still in the height of his rapt mood when the door of the music-room turned on its hinge. It was Miss Richmond who entered, moving gracefully forward to the concluding strains of the overture. There was no vacant seat in front, but Noel Bartholomew rose from his instantly. Félicie, who accompanied her mistress, retired to the farther end of the room.

There was no one there but was wondering what strange vagary had possessed Miss Richmond to come down from Yarrell Croft on a midwinter evening in order to be present at an entertainment which hardly pretended to be above the 'penny-reading' class. She was dressed from head to foot in rich, costly furs, but the room being warm, she threw her mantle aside, displaying a handsome violet-tinted dress adorned with lace and ribbons. Yet it was not her dress, but herself, that made a presence in the room—an oppressive presence for some, though she sat so quietly, and listened so attentively, resting her chin on her white hand, as she did everywhere, and leaning forward, with an apparent

I wondered at nothing after I had been a month at Deephaven; that was a few years after his father's death. I went there for a little change, choosing Deephaven because David was there, and because he offered to let me have lodgings in his mother's house. I believe he repented of the latter step; I know I did; and I was glad when my month was over. But it qualified me to write David Elseker's biography if I had had the trick of writing.

'It is of David I am speaking, not of his family; but since his career as an artist, his fame, his very life was sacrificed to them, I cannot ignore them. They must have been utterly blind to their own interests. But it was wilful blindness, since I attempted myself with all the strength I had to open their eyes; to show them that if they would but bear even a little less hardly upon David's strength he would have some chance of rising. I told them plainly that he might rise to almost any height he chose in his own line; and that whatever that height might be they would—as a matter of course—share the material advantages of it. But it was no use. David might paint pot-boilers, or he might paint masterpieces, it was nothing to them; but not an hour's peace should be secured to him by any effort of theirs; nor one bill the less handed over to him to be paid; though all the while his very soul sickened at the sight of the worthless work he had to go on producing in shame and silence year after year; and though everybody who had ever heard of him was wondering at his wasted life, his wasted strength, his wasted talent. It was another case of 'promise' without performance, they said; another instance of mistaken ambition, of an over-vain self-estimate. All this David knew, and felt, and writhed under. More than once he made a desperate effort, beginning a picture into which he meant to put his best; but each time some fresh blow came before he was half-way through, and the picture had to be abandoned in order that some miserable piece of commonplace might be produced on the instant for instant needs. . . . Telling the story in this crude way it seems like nothing; but an intense sadness underlies it for me. The young fellow was so keen, so eager, so persistent; and yet he was so patient in his long-suffering. . . . I can't tell you about the end. . . . I was glad when I heard of it, knowing certainly that David would be

and gesture betrayed them. If she turned her head, it was as if she cried out for sympathy.

The people were going out. Genevieve went with Mrs. Caton into the inner room to put on her hat and cloak. When George Kirkoswald came up to where Bartholomew stood listening to Miss Richmond, she was saying :

‘I am waiting for your daughter. She will accept a seat in the carriage this evening, it is so cold.’

Then she turned to George, holding out her pretty hand.

‘You will persuade Miss Bartholomew, will you not? Though it is so moonlight and so lovely, the air is very chill.’

Genevieve did not need much persuasion. There was a little of the old authoritativeness in George’s glance.

‘You will accept Miss Richmond’s kindness,’ he said with quiet emphasis.

He went with them to the carriage. Félicie was there with rugs and shawls. The moon was shining down with its fullest, frostiest shining. Genevieve had taken her seat; Miss Richmond stood hesitating, with one foot on the step. She was looking upward; the soft light was on her face and in her wistful eyes.

‘I had something to say,’ she began, speaking gently and slowly. ‘What was it? Why should people always have to put things into words? I wish one might be understood without words!’

‘I wonder if I do understand?’ Kirkoswald said. He could not speak plainly, and Miss Richmond knew that he could not. Yet he felt her mood through his own. She was changing, relenting. She wished him to be happy; she wished to try to offer him recompense for the long, dull, aching misery that she had caused him. All this passed through his mind in a single flash of thought, but he could not utter it. Miss Richmond was getting into the carriage without making any sign that he could interpret. ‘I shall come over to Yarrell,’ he said. ‘I shall come purposely to see if you have remembered what it was that you wanted to say to me to-night.’

The carriage went slowly up the cliff-side. Bartholomew and Kirkoswald followed, talking, as men will talk, of anything and everything so that it be not the thing nearest to them at the

standpoint all might be better as it was. It might be well that he should fail, well that he should die. That was all that was said of him, that he had failed, and died of his failure. There was a time when I wished myself to have the French epitaph graven on his tombstone :

‘*Naître, souffrir, mourir ; c’est tout mon histoire.*”

‘Not all his history,’ said the Canon, ‘not all ; only to the end of the first chapter.’

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There was a deeper glow on Sir Galahad’s face when the two who sat by the fire turned to the table. He had not been listening to the story of David Elseker, that was evident.

‘I have been listening to Miss Bartholomew,’ he said, speaking as if he were saying something that he had determined not to conceal. ‘I have been listening to her all the while, and I could go on listening. I did not dream it was so late.’ When he shook hands with Genevieve at parting, he said quite audibly, ‘I—I shall come again soon. May I come in the morning next time, before luncheon? It gets dark so soon, doesn’t it? It’s nearly dark now, you know. . . . You will let me come in the forenoon when I come again?’

CHAPTER XLVI.

‘MAY NOT LIKING BE SO SIMPLE-SWEET?’

‘Had she willed it, still had stood the screen
So slight, so sure, ’twixt my love and her ;
I could fix her face with a guard between,
And find her soul as when friends confer,
Friends—lovers that might have been.’

ROBERT BROWNING.

THERE was not much news in the letter that George Kirkoswald wrote to Mr. Bartholomew from Halkington’s Hotel. He had been sitting up all night with John Warburton, who had passed through the crisis of his sudden illness, but was lying very weak and exhausted in the unfamiliar room. The only familiar thing about him was the dark, rugged, tender face of the man who

were sitting in the firelight. The day had gone, and after much persuasion Keturah had gone too, but not without tears and protestations.

'You are thinking of Herbert's poem?' Bartholomew asked.

'Yes:—

"Who sweeps a room as for Thy law,
Makes that and the action fine."

So I shall sweep conscientiously; and if I am awkward I shall think of Natalie Narishkin.' .

'And it will not be for long, dear.'

'But you are not thinking that I am speaking of it because I mind it, father? Indeed, you should know me better than that. No one enjoys new experiences and experiments more than I do; I enjoy them for their own sake. . . . And there is more behind this,' Genevieve added, with a change of tone.

'Yes, there is more behind,' Bartholomew replied. 'Through all this trial I have felt that it was a permission to taste a little of the cup of pain as it is mixed for others. Think of the people who all their life long live as we are living now—in fear, in uncertainty, and on the very verge of want. One finds the secret of such sorrow. It is not hunger, nor the dread of death by hunger. It is the continued mental anxiety, never lifted, never relaxed. . . . May God help but one such sufferer for my suffering and my prayer to-night!' he added reverently, as a fresh gust of wind dashed a shower of sleety hail upon the window-pane.

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It was not the delicate, rarely-seen rime that whitened and brightened the world next morning, but the effect of the light showers of snow that had fallen during the frosty night was almost equally beautiful. If it were less mystic, more pronounced, it was also less evanescent.

Genevieve dressed herself in the chill twilight with a decided feeling of novelty and amusement. She would have no part to act for her father's cheering and sympathy. An old tennis-apron was carefully pinned on. 'I think I shall carry a duster in the pocket permanently,' she said to herself, with a smile. Then, in a graver mood, she sat down to glance for a few moments over the pages of a book that was lying on the table:

and Genevieve would have been happier too, for the letter was not satisfying.

It was a chill, gray morning, with long, low boomings of wind in the distance, as if a storm threatened. Genevieve thought of little Davy Drewe; she always thought of him when the weather was wild at sea. His little model of the *Viking* stood there on the bracket over the bookcase, still and straight, though the strongest gust swept the ivy on the thatch outside; the leaves shivered on the pane; the Prince sat silent on his perch; the fire burned low and dim; George's letter was lying in Genevieve's lap. She had read it twice through; but the second reading yielded no life, no sympathy, no warmth. There was no answer to the strong cry for human nearness and intercourse that had gone up so often from that little room of late. The days were better when such cries had no meaning, when each hour brought sufficient for the needs of the hour. It was not all good, that tasting of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. Things could no more be as if she had never touched that fatal tree.

It could hardly be said that it was want of faith that beset her soul. 'I trust him,' the girl said to herself, 'I trust him wholly. I am not so low that I should have doubt or fear. It is not that; it is that I need him, that I want to hear him speak, to hear him speak to me, to see his eyes looking into mine with all the truth and all the meaning of all life in them. I am forgetting his face; I cannot picture him in the darkness that is everywhere. I cannot see him smile, and I cannot see the frown that comes upon his forehead even when his eyes are all alight with laughter. . . . Ah! to think that it should be so, that one should be nothing alone, nothing apart; that he should be there, I here, and each of us no more than

"The divided half of such
A friendship as had master'd Time."

But it is not mastering time; it is not mastering circumstance; it is not yet complete enough, nor round enough. . . . George, if you were here now I would speak; at all risks I would speak, and I would compel you to speak. And you should know that my love is great enough, great enough for love's greatest destiny—a perfect sacrifice. There are times when I feel that it is written,

CHAPTER XLIX.

'VICTORIOUS IN A STRIFE WHERE ONCE HE FAILED.'

'Formerly
He turned his face upon me quick enough
If I said "father." Now, I might cry loud.'

E. B. BROWNING.

Do people, when they lose their presence of mind, *always* do the thing that they ought not to have done? May not a serviceable instinct take the place of the lost mind? Surely the impulses that come of a lifelong habit of right feeling, sensible thinking, cannot always be wrong when called in at a crisis. It seems probable that many a one who gets credit for presence of mind in an emergency might be willing to confess that mind had nothing to do with the matter at all. A shock, a stun, scattered senses, a passionate desire to be doing something—that is all that can be remembered, though the people praise you ever so loudly.

Genevieve Bartholomew remembered nothing afterwards but the sight of the dark, still form lying on the studio floor between the returned pictures.

Though she forgot all else, she could never forget that. She did not know that she had called to her father in despairing, beseeching tones, imploring him to speak; that she had tried to lift the gray head from the floor; that, finding herself unable to do more than that, she had placed it on a cushion, and had covered the still, prostrate figure with rugs. This was all done in the first moment of distraction and terror. Then the girl went flying through the orchard, and away up the snow-covered field-paths to Hunsgarth Hags, just as she had dressed herself for her morning's work; she had not stayed even to snatch a hat or shawl. But the keen frosty air had no chilliness in it; the sun rising silently upon the earth had no beauty. The whole world had only one vision—a vision of a dark figure lying lifeless, and left alone.

Her hands were clasped: she was praying passionately and audibly as she went upward. But her voice ceased presently. When she reached the Hags she could not speak at all. She

brain in the least ; it leaves one at liberty to brood over all manner of things. I always think the women who can sit and sew quite contentedly for hours together, with no one to speak to, must be delightfully happy women.’

The curate kept silence for a little while, blushing, thinking, looking up now and then with a pained, perturbed look that Genevieve could not understand.

‘Do you know I’ve been more than ever afraid lately that you weren’t happy?’ he said in a low voice that seemed to be broken by its own weight of sympathy. ‘And it has made me unhappy to think of it. I couldn’t have borne to think of it at all if I hadn’t wished—if I hadn’t hoped that, perhaps—perhaps—something might come to make you happier. . . . I have thought of it almost always lately, almost ceaselessly. . . . It seems too much to hope. It is too much ; but I couldn’t help it ; I couldn’t put the hope away, not till I asked you, not till you had said yourself that it couldn’t be. . . . Must you say that, do you think? Is it impossible that I should ever make you happier? Is it . . .’

It was only a little exclamation from Genevieve that had stopped him, a little cry of surprise, and pain, and self-reproach.

‘Oh, Mr. Severne!’ she said, her eyes wide with distress, her lips tremulous. ‘Have I been so stupid? so cruel? Believe that I did not know, that I did not see. How could I—how could I know or dream of it? . . . I am afraid that I was caring—that I was thinking only of someone else. . . . But, oh, I am sorry—you will believe that I am sorry?’

There was silence again in the little room—a long silence. There was no blush on Mr. Severne’s face when he spoke again.

‘I know you did not see,’ he said, speaking quite calmly, quite strongly, and with a greater self-possession than had ever been his before—‘I know that you did not dream of it. And so far from being cruel, your kindness has been so great, so beautiful, that I have wondered at it always. It has been the greatest joy that I have ever known. . . . It will always be that. . . . I know I hardly need ask you—you will be just the same to me? This—this mistake that I have made will not come between us? You will not blame me, nor be cold to me?’

‘It shall never come between us!’ said Genevieve, holding out

face. 'I'm rather sorry to have a patient at Netherbank. I suppose you are finding that you are hardly yet acclimatized. Certainly this cold weather is very trying.'

Then he sat down with a careless swing in one of the uncomfortable antique chairs near the sofa. Bartholomew was sitting up, leaning forward in a tired, weary way.

'I feel very much ashamed of myself,' he said, smiling, and looking more wan for the smile. 'To think of my having brought you out here at this time of day!'

It was a perplexing case for a doctor, and one that required careful thought before any satisfactory diagnosis could be arrived at. The prostration of strength was only too evident, and the fact that there had been a sudden mental shock was evident also—this Bartholomew himself confessed, as he felt bound to do; while Genevieve sat by him, holding his hand, and trying to keep back the slow, hot tears that came to her relief.

'It will all come out, I am afraid,' the artist said with quivering lips. 'I would keep it quiet if I could, but the man who brought the pictures back, and put them down at my door this morning, will hardly keep such a matter secret. I fancy he was a Thurkeld Abbas man.'

'Did he say anything, father?' Genevieve asked with white lips, and eyes that yet looked through a mist of tears.

'Yes, dear; he had a message, a brief message to give: "Mr. Richmond's compliments, an' he's sent them pictur's back." That was all the man said, but he looked more. I shall not soon forget his look. If ever man was ashamed of his errand, he was ashamed. There was another man in the lane below, I think; indeed, there must have been. The pictures are too large to have been brought even from the village by one man. . . . But I cannot tell. I was feeling faint. I had not slept all night, and I had come down here to see if the air would revive me. I had only just come when I heard a knock at the door. The pictures were standing there, and the man with them. That is all I remember. It was a kind of climax, I suppose, the insult and the humiliation coming after long anxiety. . . . But it is over now. I shall be all right in an hour or two.'

'Say a day or two, or a week or two,' said Dr. Armitage. 'I

Bartholomew paused awhile before he replied ; then he said :

‘Yes, when it is all over I may perhaps be grateful to Mr. Richmond for having opened my eyes. I feel as if I had lived a blinded life till now, blinded to all real suffering, real pressure of anxiety, to the existence of such a thing as actual oppression.’

A few more days went on. A little more hunger, a little more need of the common necessities of life had to be endured, and was endured bravely. The fire was carefully kept low, though the weather was chill and windy. Keturah was considerably kept patient, but it was not difficult to keep her patient. She moved about with a new quietness, as if the sorrow and strain that was in the house were a kind of sickness. And she knew as well as anyone knew that the next moment that came might put an end to this strange trial. There was something almost pathetic in the way she sat or stood with her eyes fixed on a certain point of the edge of the moor. If Mr. Richmond came over that way she could see him pass between the two stunted trees that grew one on either side of the path, and it would be something delightful to have to run down to the studio, or into the little sitting-room, with the news that Deliverance, as represented by Cecil Richmond, was coming through the whin and heather of Langbarugh Moor. The watching was weary work, but she would have her reward if she might watch to any such good purpose as this.

But in the event there came a morning when the last shilling had to be sent to Thirkeld Abbas for bread. Keturah went down to buy it, and as soon as she had gone Bartholomew sat down with a white resolute face to his daughter’s writing-table.

‘Must you do it?’ Genevieve said, stooping to kiss the lined, troubled forehead.

‘Yes,’ he replied ; ‘yes, I must do it. I must write to Mr. Richmond. . . . You see the alternative would not fall upon myself alone.’

When the afternoon came Bartholomew consented to go out of doors. He would go anywhere now ; he would do anything. Of course he would go down to Soulsgrif Bight if his daughter wanted to go there. Perhaps the sea-breeze would lift the pressure from his brain a little. Something was weighing there very heavily. It

'I think it only my duty to say to you that the attack of this morning has been of a more critical nature than I admitted while speaking to your father. . . . I do not say this to alarm you, but to impress upon you the fact that he will require to be careful. He ought to have absolute rest from anxiety. As soon as he is fit for work I shall encourage him to begin at once, and it may be that he will throw off all this much more easily than I think. So I repeat, don't be alarmed, and spare him all the mental disquietude he may be spared. . . . Now you will understand more clearly why it is that I want you to have some help. And since I have no time to spare, pardon my brevity. Would you like to have Mr. Kirkoswald's advice in this matter? If so, I will ride round that way; or would you prefer that I should call at the Rectory as I pass, and ask Canon Gabriel to come over?'

A quick blush that was more of pain than of maiden shame surged over Genevieve's cheek.

'It will be easier for you to call at the Rectory,' she said in quiet, indifferent tones.

The doctor smiled; then he said 'Good-bye' in his hearty, cheery fashion, and rode off, thinking it pitiful that a woman so young, so beautiful, so regal-looking, should be buried in such a place as that, and buried under such a weight of sorrow, too.

'If I were Kirkoswald, she shouldn't stay there another week,' he said to himself. 'But, after all, the rumour that mentions the two names in a breath may be only an idle one. Rumour has been very busy about Netherbank of late.'

So the doctor was thinking as he went down between the white, sparkling hedgerows. Genevieve had stopped for a moment in the kitchen to speak to Miss Craven, who was going home.

'I must go,' she said. 'I've left the milk stannin' in the pails; I hadn't even got it siled. But I'll be back afore long. An' Keturah 'll be here afore I get down again.'

'You have sent for her?'

'Of course I've sent for her. I've sent Hanson, an' he'll fetch some groceries an' things back with him, an' leave 'em here as he passes. He doesn't know but what you've sent for 'em, so don't you say 'at you didn't. An' what are you cryin' for? It'll be all right.'

no more. She were calm an' quiet all that daäy, as calm as if she'd been lift up to heaven a bit, an' let doon agen.

'But 'twas all ower next daäy. A letter com fra the owners—there was a little book in it—an' the letter told how Davy had had a desper't fight for his life. The ship had struck on a reef, somewhere oot foreign, an' the little fellow had knocked aboot all neet among the breakers in a tool-chest; but t' chest were empty when it washed up i' the mornin'. . . . 'Twas ower much for poor Ailsie, that was. Mr. Stuart, him up at the readin'-room yonder, read the letter for her, an' she sat still as a steäne when he read it, an' she niver shed no tear. She's niver shed noän yet, so they saäy. But ivery tide, dayleet or dark, she walks out there, up an' doon among the rocks leuking for the little lad. . . . She's leuking now. Ah reckon she'll be goin' on leuking.'

The dull gray sky was growing grayer, the chill wind more chill than before; the sea-gulls came flapping overhead, crying with hoarse cries. Yet still the dark figure wandered up and down among the rocks where the cruel sea was crawling to the cliffs beyond. Noel Bartholomew and his daughter went on over the wreck-strewn sands—the wide house of mourning that Nature offered to the bereaved woman for her use; veiling her light meanwhile, and draping the dark cliffs in purple shadow.

There was almost a smile on the mother's wan face, in the gray dreamy eyes—dreamy with looking out over unseen distances. She had made no attempt to provide herself with any change of dress. Her plaided shawl was over her head, her coloured print gown fluttered in the wind.

'Ya'll be come for the little book,' she said, speaking in a tone that was milder and more gentle than she was wont to use. 'I've left it at home; but Ah'll get it for you next time you come if t' tide be up. Ah'll be sure to get it. 'Twas so said i' the letter 'at the laädy was te hev it. . . . Davy had said that; an' they put it i' the letter.'

'Perhaps you would like to keep it?' Genevieve began, speaking sympathetically; but Ailsie quickly interrupted her.

'Keep it! Oh, whisht, miss, whisht! Ah'd niver keep it. Davy 'll ask aboot it—he's sure te ask when Ah find him. An Ah'm boun' te find him. The sea's boun' te give up her dead. It

CHAPTER L.

WORDS WHICH LIFT UP ONE CORNER OF THE VEIL.

'The Divine charity, of which the Cup of the Communion is the emblem, belongs to the whole Church. To recover that Holy Cup, that real Life-blood of the Redeemer, is a quest worthy of all the chivalry of our time, worthy of all the courage of Lancelot, worthy of all the purity of Galahad.'

DEAN STANLEY.

THEY went up the orchard together, the father's pale thin hand within the daughter's arm. Some of Genevieve's doves were wheeling about over the apple-boughs; the two white ones were cooing on the window-sill. Within there was a yellow rose-tree in bloom; it had only one rose, but that was something in late November; and the sunshine upon its creamy petals seemed to crown it for reward.

They sat down by the fire; Genevieve on a footstool at her father's feet, her head resting upon his knee. It was a time to be silent; but the silence was eloquent in its sympathy, its comfort, its perfect understanding.

Relief from a great strain, a great and sudden shock, is happiness in itself. That one may be at peace is matter for a gratitude that is almost rapture.

Presently Keturah came. There was a tear glistening in her round surprised eyes; but she wiped it quickly away because Joe Hanson was there with Miss Craven's butter-basket full of packages, and also because Canon Gabriel was coming along the pathway through the field. The old man seemed paler and more fragile than ever as he entered the little sitting-room where Bartholomew sat holding his chill hands to the fire.

'I shall leave you to entertain each other,' Genevieve said. 'I am going to make some beef-tea. Then I shall come and expect to be entertained in recognition of my services. . . . Father, you will not let Canon Gabriel miss my chattering tongue!'

'Then don't stay long enough to be missed, dear,' said the artist, speaking as if it were a pain to him to miss her at all.

He looked up at the Canon as the door closed, and the Canon understood the look.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

'TURN THY WILD WHEEL THRO' SUNSHINE, STORM, AND CLOUD.'

'Round me too the night
 In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.
 I see her veil draw soft across the day,
 I feel her slowly-chilling breath invade
 The cheeks grown thin, the brown hair sprent with gray ;
 I feel her finger light
 Laid pausefully upon life's headlong train ;—
 The foot less prompt to meet the morning dew,
 The heart less bounding at emotion new,
 And hope, once crush'd, less quick to spring again.'
 MATTHEW ARNOLD.

WHEN Genevieve came down from her little room under the thatch on the morning of the concert-day her eyes were alight with a new anticipation. It was not the evening's success for which she was so eager, but the morning's pleasure. There was a hoarfrost upon the land.

A cup of tea, some dry toast was waiting. 'They've only looked at the tray,' Keturah said to herself a few minutes later, when she saw her master and mistress going out arm-in-arm, stepping from the cottage door into a wide, still realm of perfect and unearthly-seeming beauty. The trees stood as if moved to a conscious calm by their own exceeding loveliness ; every bough, every twig, made you feel as if you had never in your lifetime noticed the perfectness of form and curve displayed by a branching tree. The rime was everywhere, on the tiniest point of the tiniest briar-leaf ; and the undertones of colour struck through the thin diamond encrustation with an altogether new and delicate tenderness of tint and tone.

They went down to the studio by the grassy orchard ways, brushing sparkling crystals from the undergrowth at every step. Genevieve's white pigeons were wheeling up against the blue-gray monotone of the sky. All else was motionless. The studio was full of a steady and admirable light for painting. It had to be concentrated a little on the spot where the easel stood with the 'Sir Galahad' upon it. It was many weeks since Bartholomew had touched the fine spiritual-looking head before him. He was

then the tears began to drop slowly over her face. They would not be kept back any longer now.

They were quite silent tears ; and seeing that they were tears of relief the Canon made no effort to check them. He took Genevieve's hand in his, and stroked it gently and tenderly as he would have stroked the hand of a sick child.

'It has all been so strange !' she said presently, speaking out of the middle of her own *résumé* of things. 'It has been so unexpected, so unaccountable, so unforgivable !'

'Unforgivable ?' the Canon repeated, lifting his fine spiritual face with a look of surprise. 'Are you finding yourself unable to forgive ?'

'Yes,' said the girl, seeming as if the question had roused her to a newer and more passionate pain. 'Yes : I must tell the truth ; it will do me good to tell the truth, since it hurts me to keep it. I am feeling full of unforgiveness, full of bitterness, full of resentment. They have been so hard, these people. There was the long silence, the refusal to answer my father's letters, though he wrote so quietly, so patiently ; that was an insult that was difficult to bear ; nay, it was more than that, it was an oppression. And now this last blow, this worst wrong, this worst injustice, could they have done it in a more cruel and stinging way ? . . . The deed was theirs, the stroke that laid my father low ; but it is not their mercy that has brought him back to life, not their goodness that gave him back to me. Can I ever forget ? Can I ever forgive ? . . . But help me, help me if you can ; for it is such a misery as I have never known, this hardness that is in me, this indignation, this ceaseless sense of embittered feeling. . . . Deliver me from it ; deliver me if you can. Say something to make me feel as if I could forgive !'

'You want to forgive, then ?' the old man asked, speaking very quietly.

'Yes,' the girl said, clasping her hands, trying to keep back a fresh flow of tears. 'Yes ; I do want to forgive them. I would if I could. And I want to do it now, before the sense of wrong wears itself out. There is no virtue in the forgiveness that comes of forgetfulness.'

'Then it is because you know forgiveness to be a duty that you desire to arrive at it ?'

It was a very brief note. If it were cruel, it was not elaborate cruelty. If it were hard and unseeing, the hardness was not prolonged. If it struck like a blow, the blow was quickly dealt.

'I have received your letter,' Mr. Richmond wrote. 'The pictures are very good, but the price is more than I expected. Will you take them back? I think you would be able to dispose of them.'

Genevieve put her arm round her father's neck, and drew his face to hers and kissed him.

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The worst of the sickening shock was over when they began to speak of it.

'You will have noticed that Mr. Richmond has not mentioned his sister's name,' Bartholomew said.

'Yes,' replied Genevieve; 'and I also remember that Miss Richmond did not allude to the pictures that day when she met Mr. Kirkoswald here. I do not think that she has alluded to them at all.'

'What inference do you draw?'

'That there is not perfect confidence in this matter between the brother and sister.'

'So I think; and so I fear.'

'You fear?'

'Yes. Miss Richmond's pride alone would have saved us such a stroke as this.'

In writing to Cecil Richmond Bartholomew had, of course, mentioned the price of the pictures. The view of Yarrell Croft was to be fifty guineas, the garden-scene seventy.

'But it is so little!' Genevieve had said. 'You would have put double that price upon them if you had sent them to London.'

This was true; and the knowledge that it was true did much to relieve the keenness of the overwhelming blow that had fallen; and it did something toward raising a suspicion of complications underneath the affair that neither Noel Bartholomew nor his daughter might do more than suspect. Yet, as was natural, the man wearied himself with trying to arrive at some solution of this strange turn of events. He was altogether weary and heart-sick.

'I am quite incapable of discerning what it will be wisest to do

Gabriel. 'But you will believe that I am not revengeful, that I have no desire to see my father's wrongs avenged in any way?'

'What do you desire?' asked the Canon. 'What is your highest and strongest wish?'

'My highest wish of all is that Miss Richmond, or Mr. Richmond, or both of them together, might come down and say, "We are sorry for all this pain."'

'And what excuse, what motive would you wish them to urge for having caused the pain?' asked Bartholomew.

'I would wish them to tell the truth, whatever the truth may be. If all is as I suspect, Miss Richmond would say, being in a regretful and human mood, "I have come down to explain, to tell you that my brother gave these commissions thoughtlessly, that our silence was the result of an habitual carelessness about small things that do not concern ourselves; that not understanding the value of works of art, and considering the price of the pictures to be above their worth, we returned them, not dreaming for a moment that it would really matter to Mr. Bartholomew whether we kept them or not; and that now we have discovered that our carelessness and aloofness has caused you distress, we are anxious to make such atonement as we may." . . . There! you have my highest notion of the good that could come out of all this evil.'

'And from that time there would be no more unforgiveness?'

'There would be no more unforgiveness. There would be comprehension, with a high admiration on my part for the man or woman who could confess to having erred in understanding.'

'Then my advice,' said the Canon, 'is simply this, that you should suppose that the Richmonds would do all that you dream might be done if their human culture had been such as to lead them to the conception of it. For my own part, I have little but pity for them in this matter, supposing it all to be as you say; and I think it very probable that your suppositions may be correct. They are not so low down in the scale of humanity but they must feel a great deal more than they seem to feel. I pity them the uneasy remorse they must have, that they will certainly have, when they hear of your father's illness; the consciousness of an essential vulgarity in their deed; the utter unsatisfactoriness of such a victory as they probably imagine themselves to have gained.'

lamplight had been streaming down some time when Noel Bartholomew and his daughter went into the music-room. Mrs. Caton was arranging the girls on the platform. She had taken the children under her special protection, and had provided each little girl with a warm dark-red frock for the winter concert-evenings; whereupon Mrs. Damer had said that Mrs. Caton was growing quite sensible; and Miss Standen had added that she hoped sensibleness was like charity, and began at home.

These small amenities of speech in nowise interfered with the amenity of the general effect of things. Two or three more young ladies had been invited, who could sing pretty songs and wear pretty dresses. One of them looked like a tall straight daffodil, with its petals arranged as multitudinous frills. A little stout lady beside her had the appearance of a toilet pincushion, with her deep white flounce and underskirt of pale pink. Mrs. Caton had besought everybody to look up their old evening dresses, and to put them on when they came to sing. She was quite sure the fisher-folk of Soulsgrif Bight would take it as a compliment. A belief in pleasing and effective colour was one of the chief articles of her social creed. It was an insult to your neighbourhood to wear a gown that the eye could not rest upon with pleasure, or soothing, or satisfaction. And Mrs. Caton was a consistent woman.

Genevieve went smiling up to the platform in her white serge dress. She had a double band of plain black velvet round her head, confining her yellow rippling hair after the manner seen on Greek coins. Mr. Severne had offered her his arm, and he went with her across the back of the platform to where George Kirkoswald stood talking to Wilfrid Stuart about some violin-music. George did not know that Genevieve had come. He was intending to walk a little way up the Bank when this last arrangement was made; and now here was a clear penetrating voice close beside him, saying, with a little quiver in it, ‘How do you do, Mr. Kirkoswald?’

He started visibly as he turned. ‘I have only been home two hours,’ he said, taking Genevieve’s hand in his for a moment. He said the words as if he meant them for an apology; but none was needed now that he was there, looking into her eyes alone, trying to read at a glance the history of the days. There was

Besides, there is another reason,' he continued. Then he stopped. He could not say that he did not dare to think of one so aged, so frail, so sensitive, exposing himself to the excitement and annoyance of such an interview as that would probably be. If anyone went to Yarrell Croft, it should be Kirkoswald, who was stronger, more astute, and would be better able to meet the Richmonds on their own ground.

Perhaps the Canon misunderstood the sudden pause, the silence; he did not urge his offer of help. 'If there is anything I can do you will not hesitate to ask me,' he said. 'And since that matter is disposed of, I will pass on to the next. Have you sold the Judas?—the original head, I mean.'

'No,' said Bartholomew, smiling. 'One does not expect to sell pictures in Murk-Marishes. Besides, that was only a study.'

'But, as you know, a most masterly study. I have felt motions of covetousness since the first moment I saw it. Am I asking too much in asking you to let me have it?'

'Certainly, I will let you have it if you have taken a fancy to it. . . . You must leave it a little while, though, till I get the head of the figure finished. I mean to finish it now.'

There was a little friendly difference about the price; but the Canon knew the value of his purchase too well to take it at Bartholomew's own inadequate appraisal. Of course the artist understood the old man's motive in buying it just now; but the Canon did not divine to the full all that his small act meant. Genevieve knew, and Dorothy Craven knew, and perhaps Keturah might guess, since there was no more any need for anxiety concerning the daily bread. It was as if a great weight had been lifted off from every heart under the roof of the thatched cottage—a weight that no man nor woman may appreciate until they have staggered along under it for weary days and wearier nights; until they have learnt that a failing pulse means a failing hope, a failing enterprise, a failure of the very desire for life itself. But the lesson once learnt is not forgotten, and the human being who has it in remembrance looks out over God's world with eyes that see farther and penetrate deeper than the eyes of the man whose worst earthly trial is the incompetency of his cook. Some knowledge is power, and some knowledge is light, and there is a knowledge that is as purifying as fire from off the altar.

unconsciousness of herself, of her beauty, of her dress, that made her seem to be the most absolutely picturesque woman that ever breathed. Even Noel Bartholomew, standing there at a little distance, said to himself, 'If I could paint Miss Richmond as she sits at the present moment, I should win the applause of the world for the production of a new type of feminine beauty and character.'

Doubtless such a picture would have been in a measure new. It is seldom that a woman is at once so beautiful, so strong, so varied, so capable of evil, so desirous of good, as Diana Richmond appeared to be as she sat there, listening to Mr. Severne as he sang *The Lost Chord*; to Agatha Damer when she sang *Forgive and Forget*; to Genevieve, who sang Schubert's *Adieu*. Wilfrid Stuart came in between with his violin; and Mrs. Caton swept the keys of the pianoforte with quite new force of execution since Miss Richmond was there to listen. It was well known in the neighbourhood that Miss Richmond was no musician; and say that how you will, you speak of the absence of a power not always fully understood. That the music in you is quite mute is much as if you said, 'I have not learnt to speak the thing I should like to utter.'

All the evening George Kirkoswald remained on the platform; he would not again desert his post, be the post ever so trifling. He stood with folded arms between the piano and the screen of red-berried holly, tall, erect, seeming as if he frowned more in thoughtfulness than in sadness or perplexity. More than once he looked toward where Miss Richmond sat with her beautiful upturned face, and her white eyelids dropping over dark, inscrutable eyes. He felt that he had more strength within himself than he had had when he met those eyes before.

The concert came to an end at last, though the programme had not been a brief one. Noel Bartholomew came forward and shook hands with Miss Richmond, who thanked him with a quiet and intent graciousness for giving up his seat. That was the mood she was in—a quiet, graceful, courteous mood, which seemed all the quieter because no one could help divining the strong meanings and yearnings that were deliberately subdued and hidden underneath. They were only half hidden. Every glance

to eyes trained by sorrow ; and you shall not need to tell your tale to one acquainted with grief.

All the afternoon he had thought only of her, of that hope which was half a dread that he had had concerning her in the spring ; which had been deferred so strangely all through the summer ; and now was apparently passing out of all recognition as a distinct idea. He had not understood ; he had only once asked his daughter if there was anything that he might understand, and her reply had for the moment almost satisfied him. It was not so long ago, only a few weeks since she had said, ' Silence is not congenial to me ; but I would rather keep silence in this instance ; and you may trust *him* too. I know that you may trust him.'

That day also had been put further back for Bartholomew by the stress and strain of intervening circumstance. His own feeling in the matter, his perfect trust, his perfect patience, was half forgotten. What if after all he had to go, to leave his child friendless, penniless, and alone ? What then ? . . . There was a great silence in the man's heart, the silence of an inexpressible anguish.

Even as he endured it he was watching her as she moved about the room, placing the lamp on the bracket between the windows, lifting the yellow rose-tree to the table, drawing the curtains, arranging the tea-cups, stirring the fire into a blaze. The great gray cloud curtain was descending now, dashing in wild rain-drops upon the window-pane ; the chill wind was coming gustily up from the sea. It was the sort of night when people awake afresh to appreciation of their comforts, their protections, their alleviations. However unsatisfactory their surroundings may be at other times, they become satisfactory by such sharp contrast as memory, inspired by rough elements, can present to most people on occasion.

' What a dismal night for those who are compelled to be out !' Genevieve was saying. Her eye had fallen upon the little *Viking*. Was poor Ailsie out ? Was she there wandering up and down among the rough, dark stones, where the white foam was breaking ? There, also, there was trouble ; and up at Hunsgarth Hagg's there was trouble. Dorothy Craven's face had gone back to the old thinness and paleness that it had worn before that gleam of bright-

moment. Bartholomew could not help feeling both perplexed and disappointed. He had been so certain that the coming of Miss Richmond to Soulsgrif Bight had in some way been connected with the circumstances that were pressing so heavily upon himself. She had come to disclaim any influence over her brother—to decline to be responsible for him or for his actions: there were many side-motives that she might have had. It was not uncharacteristic of her to choose a place and time so singular for any communication that she might have to make. But when opportunity came she had taken no advantage of it. And Bartholomew knew that it was not for him to do so. Diana Richmond had had nothing to do with the transactions between her brother and himself.

And Miss Richmond made no mention of the matter during the drive home. Genevieve waited expectantly; she spoke of her father, of his work, but she did not succeed in eliciting any response that would have made it easy for her to go at once to the heart of this strange involution of things that was testing her father's strength so far. But before the carriage stopped at Netherbank Genevieve was certain that Diana Richmond's impassiveness in the matter was a conscious and deliberate impassiveness.

'Miss Richmond knows it all,' she said to her father next morning, as he sat there with the clear light shining down upon him, and upon the work that he could not touch. 'There is something behind that we cannot see. But we shall see if we wait.'

'Do you know what waiting means, child?'

'Yes; at least, I think I do. And by way of preparing for the worst I have given Keturah a week's holiday.'

There was no exclamation, no expostulatory remark. Bartholomew had arrived at the point when a man becomes aware that expostulation is idle, and exclamation frivolous. He accepted, with a keen pang, the idea that his daughter must light his kitchen fire, prepare his dinner, and sweep his room. The only thing that made the idea supportable was the thought of compensation. He had a theory that a time of sadness and trial is usually followed by a time of peace and satisfaction.

'I have only to think of George Herbert when I am trying to handle Keturah's broom in the morning,' Genevieve said. They

of displeasure, should linger in his presence. Some strong and fine individuality in the man attested the moral purity and rarity of the atmosphere about him. There was a distressed surprise on his face this evening, and the lines on his forehead and about his mouth were eloquent of the working of some fervid and absorbing emotion.

He hardly spoke in his surprise. Bartholomew's lip quivered humorously under his gray moustache.

'And when she came back the dog was laid laughing,' he said, offering his hand to Kirkoswald's strong warm grasp. 'That is a quotation from the antique mythological poem known as "Mother Hubbard."'

'So I perceive,' said Kirkoswald. 'And you are equal to quotation?' he asked, looking into the gray stricken face before him, seeing there evidence enough that the tale that had been told to him by Dr. Armitage had not been overcharged with colour.

'Have you dined? Will you have a cup of tea?' Genevieve asked, looking up with a pale pink colour flitting across her cheek, and the bright light of a new gladness in her eyes.

'I had my dinner at one o'clock,' George said. 'I dined in the refreshment-room at York Station. I shall be very glad of a cup of tea if you will give me one.'

'You have been to York again?' Bartholomew asked.

'Yes; I went there three days ago, the day after the concert. Poor Warburton has had a relapse,' said George.

He did not add that Mrs. Warburton had telegraphed a little prematurely in her fright and concern. Her husband had spoken so warmly of his friend that her first thought had turned toward him in a moment of sudden dread and perplexity. She had begged to be forgiven. She was in a strange place—strange to her; and she felt lonely and unnerved when her husband was ill. 'I am happy when I only know that you are on your way to us,' she had said with a tear of thankfulness in her eyes.

'Then you have not been to Usselby yet?' said Bartholomew.

'No, I have not been home,' George replied, going to the table for the cup of tea that Genevieve was pouring out for him. 'I met Armitage at Crosthwaite Station; he was on his way to

'Oh, righteous Father, and ever to be praised, the hour is come that Thy servant is to be proved.

'Oh, beloved Father, meet and right it is that in this hour Thy servant should suffer something for Thy sake.

'Oh, Father, evermore to be honoured, the hour is come which from all eternity Thou didst foreknow should come; that for a short time Thy servant should outwardly be oppressed, but inwardly should ever live with Thee.'

How small everything seemed when it was set in such a light as that! How trivial these crosses and labours were! She could only go downstairs yearning to put her best strength into each moment as it came; to do whatever her hand found to do with all the might that was in her.

These were the words that went on echoing, 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do.' They seemed to be in the frosty air that was coming in at the open door. It was the orchard door. Her father had gone down to the studio, then! She would follow him at once. Doubtless he was attempting some deed that she must disallow—lighting the studio fire, perhaps, or cleaning the grate.

All the way down under the rugged snow-laden apple-trees Genevieve went, smiling and prematurely scolding. A young spruce-fir threw its strong, snowy arms across the doorway, yet Genevieve could see that the door was open. There was a little porch of trellis-work, with some dark, bright ivy clustering about it; and underneath . . . what was the meaning of the thing that she saw underneath?

What might it mean to see standing there, leaning back against the little porch, two large pictures in handsome brightly-gilded frames? One on either side they stood, only half under cover.

At the first glance Genevieve saw that they were the Yarrell Croft pictures.

At the second glance she saw the hand that had painted them lying outstretched across the floor, the gray head that had conceived them lying upon the fallen arm. The face was downward . . . the dark, prostrate figure stirless. . . .

But one cry—but one great, piercing cry went up through the silence—

'My father! my father! my father! Would God I had died for thee!'

The depth of Noel Bartholomew's suffering, the intensity of the anguish he was enduring and hiding, had not betrayed itself before. It was betrayed now, not in the words used in asking these questions, but in the tone of unutterable cruciation in which he spoke.

He leaned his head back against his chair, pallid, exhausted. Was the terrible unconsciousness coming down upon him again? Genevieve rose to her feet, and put her arm about the tired, trouble-stricken head. Then she pressed her pale lips upon the hot, aching forehead.

'It cannot happen again, my father,' she said in low soft tones. 'It is over, and other things are over, and we shall see, believe me, my father, we shall see a long light and peace for this strife and darkness. Believe, believe that we shall yet see compensation.'

Kirkoswald sat silently, silently thinking, silently wondering. His own temperament was poetic, and therefore artistic in a sense, enabling him to comprehend where some would have been confounded. He knew well enough that the brain that expends itself in search of beauty, in search of the last expression and effect of beauty, will have no life left wherewith to live the common life, the life of endurance of human hardness, of human shortsightedness, of human greed, of human self-seeking. It was not incomprehensible to him that this man should be unable to meet an amount of insolence, of humiliation, that a commoner man would have passed by with a smile of contempt. It was not incomprehensible to him, though he did not know the worst, that this blow should have struck straight to the root of life itself. Perhaps he comprehended it all too plainly for his peace of mind. Not that he was thinking of his peace of mind then; on the contrary, his resolution was leading him into the thick of the strife.

His time had come, his time for action, for strong determination, for a fight that could but end in freedom, be the fray ever so dark and desperate, so he said to himself as he sat there thinking.

'You will know that I am at your service,' he said presently, 'and you will know that my words are not idle words. Action in

could only stand there, white, breathless, stricken with horror, and pointing downward toward Netherbank.

'It is your father?' Dorothy Craven said, taking the girl's half-frozen hand. 'I'll be ready in a minute.'

'Come—come now! . . . And your boy, Hanson, he will go for a doctor. . . . Come, oh, come now!'

They went down together, Miss Craven and Genevieve, running, hurrying breathlessly across the fields. Old Joseph Craven came to the brow of the hill.

'Eh, but it's her,' he said, smiling in his gentle, unmeaning way. 'It's her wi' the bonny gold hair. She sudn't ha' come out wi' that bonny hair when the snaw's all white upon Langbarugh Moor.'

No change had passed upon the prostrate man—none that could be discerned by a glance; but Genevieve perceived, with an intense thrill of joy, that the pulse gave faint signs of a faint vitality. She chafed the thin hands tenderly, and bathed the helpless head. Dorothy had brought some brandy, and she set herself to administer it with a slow and cautious persistency that had its reward at last. The gray, weary eyes unclosed, the ashen lips parted—there was a moment of recompense for many moments of ill.

Full life came back slowly. Privation had told upon the man's strength more than he himself knew. But by-and-by, when Genevieve had lighted the fire and drawn the sofa forward, he was able to reach it. He was lying there when Dr. Armitage came; Dorothy had gone up to look after things in the cottage. The two pictures had been put away out of sight; the studio had been made to look tidy and cheerful, to seem warm and comfortable. There was not much, save the look on Genevieve Bartholomew's face, to give extraneous evidence as to the shock and agony that the morning had brought.

Dr. Armitage was a tall, gray-haired man, with a look of outdoor life upon his russet cheek. He had met Genevieve many a time by the bedsides of the poor people of Murk-Marishes, and he came into the studio with the air of an old friend.

'Good-morning, Miss Bartholomew,' he said, shaking hands heartily, and making the most of his opportunity for reading her

glad if he might have closed them altogether upon this irksome entanglement, the first entanglement of the kind that he had ever known. For him all discord had a taint of lowness, an element of commonness, of coarseness. It seemed as if this thing were entering into his inner life, making havoc there. He was but wanting justice; yet if he got it, would it not seem as a kind of revenge, a kind of victory that would be more humiliating than any failure? Oh, how weary he was of it all! And here was this strong unwearied man begging with kind earnestness that he might take the burden, that he might fight the battle.

'You shall do as you will,' he said at last, in answer to a plea of Kirkoswald's. Genevieve had gone out to speak to Keturah about some supper for her father; the two men went on talking, planning. Bartholomew was a little anxious about the quiet conducting of the matter. When Genevieve came back again, pale, yet smiling, looking up with sweet tired eyes, George was saying:

'Trust me, what I do, I will do quietly. I hope I shall be able to come down to-morrow evening, and tell you that the affair is settled one way or another. Don't think about it now; if you can, put it away, or if you must think of it, think of it as someone else's affair, something with which you have no concern.'

To himself he added, 'And when that is settled there will be another matter to be settled.' He looked up with the thought, the resolution in his eyes; and Genevieve understood it, or thought that she understood. He was saying again to her, as he had said to her father, 'Trust me,' and he was silently adding, 'Trust me for more than this, for more than a small effort to help a friend. Trust me through the silence, trust me through the darkness, trust me for life, trust me for love. I will not fail you.'

And plainly as a look could answer, the look in Genevieve's deep dark eyes said, 'I know, I know certainly that you will not fail me.'

All the evening George Kirkoswald lingered there by the cottage fireside. He liked the brightness, the pleasantness, the warm poetic human life.

'I always think this is the most homelike home I know,' he said, looking round 'upon the well-filled bookshelves, the pale

am not given to saying things likely to depress people, but I want you to take care of yourself a little, that is all. I shall look to Miss Bartholomew for help if I have to enforce obedience.'

'You do not mean to say that, if I can work, I may not?'

'I mean to say that you may not work, that you may not think, and that you must take an abundance of extra nourishment. . . . I shall speak to Miss Bartholomew about that before I go.'

Dr. Armitage made no comment concerning the confidences that had been made to him. Comment was not in his way. He was not a silent man, but he was capable of silence, especially if anything impressed him. If he were impressed now, he did not say so, but he sat with a certain look on his face which spoke very eloquently of private opinions. This thing that he had heard was not all new to him: it was new to no one in the neighbourhood of Murk-Marishes, and he was not sorry to see and hear the painful truth for himself. He knew that he had stepped as it were into the very middle of a piece of tragic circumstance, but he asked no questions as to the beginning, and he could wait for the end. It was enough for him that he was in possession of the facts as they stood at present.

'It is the insult, the humiliation,' the artist had said; but Dr. Armitage made his own additions to this. To him, as to all other doctors, many questions not medical were presented for consideration; and though no man could be less given to interference, he was not a man to put aside an obvious duty because it happened not to be, strictly speaking, a professional duty. It appeared to him that such a one was before him now.

'You will understand me,' he said to Genevieve as she went with him up the orchard. 'I do not desire to know anything more than I know already. But it seems to me that, placed as you are at present, I ought to try to be of some use to you. I mention it to you rather than to your father, because he must not be harassed. Keep him from thinking of this affair as much as possible.'

'You are not alarmed for him now?' Genevieve asked, with a sudden new anxiety coming into her eyes, a sudden flush of fear spreading over her white face.

There was a perceptible pause.

been so sadly eventful at Netherbank. The rain was over. There was a sunny gray-white mist lying upon the Marishes. Beyond there was a gray sea, with dark-hulled ships moving north and south.

To his dismay, George saw that there were two or three carriages drawn up in the yard at the back of Yarrell Croft. 'There are people there, then,' he said to himself somewhat impatiently. Nevertheless, he went in. The big drawing-room was hot; it was half full of people who had come over to luncheon. They were talking, laughing. Diana was in a new mood. Her colour rose when George went in, and a quick, pleased light shot into her eyes.

'Now, I call this provoking,' she said. 'If I had asked you to come you would have declined. Don't take the trouble to be polite; but since you are here, sit down, and try to be sociable for once. Do you know that you are getting a dreadful character for unsociableness?'

All this was rather terrible to George Kirkoswald.

'I think, then, that it will be only honest to say that I came on business,' he replied, looking very intently into Miss Richmond's face, and speaking so that his admission could be distinctly heard. A curious little pause in the general conversation followed, compelling him to add, 'But don't let me intrude either my business or myself. I will come again. Will it suit you if I come to-morrow about this time?'

'It will suit me well; eminently well. After so much pleasure—I may even call it dissipation—at Yarrell, to-morrow will be a day of dulness, of unendurable reaction. Come to-morrow by all means. Only let me say, I don't believe in your business. Our possessions don't touch. There is Birknigg beck between. Are you going to propose a division of the beck? or of the stones at the bottom of it?'

'I will not go into the question to-day,' George said. He was a little amazed at Miss Richmond's unusual mood. Had she mistaken his errand? Had she guessed it rightly? It would have been only natural if she had guessed it; and if so, if this were the cause of the strange change in her, what was underlying her conduct towards Bartholomew?—*her* conduct, George said to

Then Dorothy laughed, but the tears came into her own eyes as she did so.

‘It’s allus the poor ’at helps the poor,’ she said, clasping Genevieve’s proffered hand. ‘You’ve done me many a good turn afore to-day, an’ I make no doubt but you’ll do me many another. Not ’at I’m doin’ aught now with an eye to what you’ll do when you’re mistress o’ Usselby Hall.’

‘Oh !, don’t say that, Miss Craven, don’t even think it, please,’ the girl begged. She was crimsoning through her tears ; her lips were tremulous. ‘Perhaps it will never be. I do not think it will ever be. But I will not forget—I will never forget that you have been my friend when I had no other.’

Then she went swiftly down the orchard again. The sun was shining clearly now ; diamonds were dropping from the apple-boughs, the red rose-hips were gleaming through the white snow ; the birds went fluttering timidly away from the branches. In the open doorway her father was standing.

The girl’s heart leapt and bounded with a great joy.

‘Oh, I am glad ! I am very glad ; but is it wise, father ?’ she said, going up to him, putting her two hands on his shoulders, and holding up her smiling, trembling lips to be kissed. ‘You are to obey—you are to obey me : Dr. Armitage says so. And I order a sofa, with cushions, and the new novel that Mr. Kirkoswald brought, and the cups of tea that are going to be brought by-and-by. Oh, come in, come in ; and let us be glad together, and happy together. . . . Try to look happier, my father !’

It was not simple unhappiness, simple despondency, that was written on Bartholomew’s face ; and Genevieve was quick to perceive that it was not. There was a new look there, a deeper gravity, a deeper quiet.

And in his heart there was a feeling that his studio where the two pictures stood was a room where some dead thing was lying.

‘Is there a fire in the sitting-room ?’ he asked.

‘Yes,’ Genevieve replied. ‘There is a good fire. Miss Craven has made it. And there is your easy-chair ; and Prince Camaralzaman is singing as if he had some special reason for singing. You will go there ? It will be better. . . . Shall I lock the studio door ?’

‘Yes, dear ; lock it, please ; and put the blinds down.’

fastened it in front. Her beautiful hands were half covered with jewels.

Kirkoswald was tolerably free from personal vanity, but he could hardly help feeling as he entered the room that his shabby loose gray coat was of the nature of a solecism. Miss Richmond was sitting there in her low chair with a mass of white lace arranged carelessly upon it, so that her dark head was thrown into relief; her eyes had a heightened brilliancy, her cheeks a touch of colour. Though it was so early, he could hardly help the feeling that she had been waiting for him, expecting him.

His task might have seemed even more difficult than it did seem, if he had known how long she had been waiting for this present moment. She had just been saying to herself, 'I have waited for it for years. I have desired it passionately.'

The usual greetings were said, the usual remarks made on the changefulness of the weather. Diana all the while was watching George carefully, admiring the look of resoluteness on his face; there was resoluteness even in the way he sat on his chair. She smiled a little as she watched.

'I shall begin to believe in your business, after all,' she said presently.

She spoke with the studied deliberateness she always used, so that no word of hers ever seemed to be said with too great ease or lightness.

'I think you can hardly refuse to believe in it, either in the existence of it or in the importance of it,' George replied. Then he added in a more conciliatory tone, 'Indeed, I am sure you will not refuse to consider the matter. You know something of it already, of course. I am speaking of the two pictures that Mr. Bartholomew has painted for your brother.'

The changes that passed over Diana's face were very slight. Her eyelids drooped a little, as if she would see Kirkoswald's face more clearly; her under lip was drawn in. Presently she leaned forward, resting her fine oval chin on her white hand.

'I thought the matter had brought *you* here,' she said. 'I knew that yesterday. . . . How was it that Mr. Bartholomew could not come himself?'

'He could hardly have done that. Pardon me, but your own

'The wind is tempered for you, my friend,' the old man said, seating himself opposite to Bartholomew.

'Yes: but the wind is a little rough,' said the younger man. Then, after a pause, he added, 'Tell me how much you know about its roughness.'

'How much I know! Well, you remember how much I knew when we spoke of this matter before—was it a fortnight ago? . . . I have heard nothing further until this morning, until Dr. Armitage poured his indignation into my ears.'

'He was indignant? . . . Sorrow is not all sorrow. The man who has but the sympathy of one friend is not left without assurance.'

'You can feel that? Then one need not sorrow for you as one sorrows for those who have no hope. . . . All the same, this trial must have its own keenness.'

'It seemed to have until this morning.'

'And since?'

Bartholomew paused before he replied. He was recalling the events which had happened to him since daylight had spread across the frosty skies.

'Since the stroke fell, I have not for one moment recognised the weight of it,' he said. 'I had no time to recognise it before unconsciousness came down; and since that I have had no inclination to dwell upon it. . . . Genevieve is feeling it far more than I am. Feeling seems almost dead within me at present; but it is not so with her. She is enduring at the highest point of endurance. If you can say one word to help her, then, for Heaven's sake, say it before you go.'

Almost as he spoke Genevieve came in, bringing a little china tray with a china cup full of beef-tea.

'Was there ever anything so dainty?' she said, kneeling on one knee, and turning the tray so that the morsels of dry toast should lie under her father's hand. . . . 'And now I am going to talk to Canon Gabriel,' she added, seating herself on her own little chair in front of the fire. She still had her tennis-apron on, with its embroidered spray of clematis all across it. Her cap had been thrown aside some time during the morning. She leaned her head back against the chair; her lips quivered, her eyes closed wearily;

Diana smiled again.

'You have lost none of your old diplomatic talent,' she said. Then a change toward something of hardness, of defiance, crept into the curves about her mouth, and she added, 'The matter is small in one way; ask anyone whether they would not consider the incident a trifling one in the life of a man like Noel Bartholomew. But it is not small in another way. . . .'

Miss Richmond paused here. Her eyes seemed to fill with a deeper darkness, her lips to meet with a fuller strength. Her utterance was more than ever deliberate, studied, inexpressive.

'It is not a small matter to me to feel that advantage has been taken of my brother's inexperience,' she said, watching Kirkoswald through her half-closed eyes with a curious intentness.

George started in his chair visibly. A dark colour spread over his face, a light like flame shot from his eyes.

'You believe that? You believe that of *him*—of Noel Bartholomew? Are you . . .'

'Am I mad? Well, no; I think not. It seems to me that it is because I am so sane that I refuse to be imposed upon.'

'Then it *is* the price? I would not believe it; I could not, since the pictures seemed to me to be worth so much more than the price asked. Even to myself I have insisted that you did not consider them to be satisfactory. That is what everyone is considering.'

'And you are afraid that his reputation will suffer?'

'Not for a moment. Such reputation as he has will not be touched by an experience he may happen to have at Murk-Marishes.'

'That is precisely what I said to Cecil. . . . By the way, let me take the opportunity of explaining that whatever blame there may be in the matter is mine, not my brother's. He is a fool in such things. He acted foolishly in the first instance, in giving any commission whatever, and, though he does not admit it, I am fully convinced that the commissions were extorted by means of undue pressure. Cecil does not admit this, as I have said, but neither does he deny it, and on these two facts, undue pressure and exorbitant price, I shall take my stand. And let me say plainly—it will save time—I mean to fight the battle to the end.'

‘It is only partly that,’ Genevieve said. ‘But, of course, I believe that it is a duty. I have always thought that forgiveness of a person who had grievously and deliberately injured another, and had never repented of the injury, was the hardest duty the Christian creed demands.’

‘And you know my opinion, that it is as it were the very core and centre of practical Christianity?’

‘Yes: I have not forgotten the day in Soulsgrif Bight. All this morning the words have been ringing in my ears, “*The love that taketh not account of evil.*” But let me speak the truth—let me confess that I am not only taking account of evil, I am overcome of it.’

‘Let me speak, dear,’ Bartholomew interposed. He was listening quietly, his clasped hands resting upon the arm of his chair. ‘Let me speak. I think, being a little excited, you are disposed to exaggerate your ill-feeling. Let me ask one question: If it were in your power to do any injury to either Mr. Richmond or to his sister, would you do it? Take time to reply.’

‘Would I injure them?’ Genevieve exclaimed, taking no time at all. ‘No; certainly. You knew that, my father, before you asked. Unforgiveness does not mean a desire for revenge. If any opportunity for doing them a kindness were to come in my way, I should probably be even more anxious to do it than if they had never hurt us or pained us at all. Sometimes I think that persistent revenge is dying out from among human passions. It seems to belong to Greek literature.’

‘I fear that is taking too favourable a view of matters,’ said the Canon. ‘I am afraid that with the uncultivated, the isolated, revenge may still acquire power enough to become a monomania.’

Bartholomew looked at him intently as he spoke. Was there any hidden meaning bearing upon present events underlying the Canon’s words? Did he remember the remarks he had made months ago concerning the conflicting passions and emotions written on the face of the Judas, remarks made even while discerning an unintended likeness in the features and expression of the face on the canvas? ‘It is like Miss Richmond!’ Mr. Severne had said; and no one had contradicted him.

‘Perhaps you are right,’ Genevieve said, answering Canon

'You anticipate it, of course,' said George, feeling as if he were entering upon a mere formality that admitted of neither desire nor fear. 'It concerns the letter you wrote to me a few months ago, after you had discovered that an engagement existed between Miss Bartholomew and myself.'

'An engagement ! . . . This is interesting. May I congratulate you ?'

'It would give me extreme pleasure to feel that you could do so sincerely,' George said, wondering, half hoping, betraying himself needlessly.

Diana laughed, a long, low, rippling laugh that had something almost like enchantment in it. Yet it was sufficiently disillusioning.

'I perceive,' he said. 'Forgive the mistake.'

'One might forgive you anything ; you are so credulous, so easily imposed upon. You are just what you always were.'

As Miss Richmond spoke she took out from a fold of her dress a small morocco case, opened it, and looked at it awhile intently. Then she looked up at George again.

'And yet you are altered in appearance,' she said, coolly comparing the portrait in her hand with the original. 'You are much older-looking ; you are darker, you are less handsome. In these things you have lost. What is it that you have gained ?'

'A friend might hope, wisdom.'

'A friend ! Yes, probably. I suppose you will hardly count me amongst your friends ?'

'Then it is because you place yourself outside,' said George, feeling that there was truth in the thing he said. Even as he sat there he knew that he sat in the presence of a strong nature with all its best strength perverted, turned aside from all that was human and womanly, poisoned by vanity, warped by selfishness, paralyzed by one experience, the experience of an enervating, and blinding, and hardening prosperity. That there was humanity underneath, if it might but be reached, he was persuaded even yet. But he knew too well that he might never reach it ; perhaps no merely human influence might avail. Still, it was not as if he confronted a stone, a thing that had no heart or soul. Then there would have been no hope. A remote and half-dead hope was better than none.

Pitying them, I could only pray for them as one prays for all those who despitely use one. Try that—prayer for them. Pray not only that you may be enabled to forgive them, but that you may see the result of your prayers for their welfare in their continued prosperity, their continued safety, their increased happiness, their additional peace. Pray for their worldly good first; then for their higher good. It is not impossible in the providence of God that you should be permitted to see the outcome of prayers made from such a motive as yours would be. That once discerned, you would no longer find yourself praying for power to forgive.'

Even as the old man spoke it seemed as if the wild waves of intolerant impulse were stilled a little. It was easier to think kindly of the people who had caused all this suffering; easier to believe that her father might come out from it unhurt, perhaps even with no smell of fire upon his garment.

'It is always so,' said the Canon, in answer to some remark of Genevieve's. 'It is always so. Christ, speaking to His disciples, spoke of two conditions on which their prayers should be answered. His followers were to have faith, and they were to forgive.

"And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any."

'And we all of us have the feeling within ourselves that when we are at peace with the world it is far easier to enter into the peace that is between God and our own souls—that is, or *may be*—it is never broken by Him.

'But I did not come only to try to comfort you with words,' the old man went on, not hesitating, not speaking with difficulty, but with a beautiful ease and tranquillity of manner. 'I came to try to help, if help may be. I need hardly ask you to let me try, if you consider that my friendship entitles me to the privilege. . . . In the first place, do you not think that I might call upon the Richmonds, and either explain, or ask them to explain? I propose this at a venture, not knowing what you may be wishing or intending to do.'

'I have had no time to intend anything yet,' replied Bartholomew. 'But I could hardly bear that any friend of mine should go to Yarrell in my name, and entreat the Richmonds to take the pictures now. . . . No, that could never be. . . .

Diana smiled, a smile that showed full appreciation of the import of the question. Then the smile died from her face quite suddenly.

'I do not know all that it might imply,' she said. 'Life is so complicated. Nothing turns as one would wish it to turn. Things have the very contrary effect to that one intends them to have.'

'There is much truth in that,' George replied, imagining again that he had perceived some tone of relenting in her voice. 'The only safeguard one has is to live one's own life as simply as may be, and not to dare to try the effect of design upon the events of other lives.'

Diana looked up at George musingly.

'The old habit!' she said. 'Preaching at me, and preaching impossibilities. But tell me what you meant just now when you said that you repented not having come sooner? What difference can it have made to you, since you admit that you are engaged to Miss Bartholomew?'

George hesitated a moment. Let the issue of this interview be as it might, there should be explanation between himself and Genevieve that evening; and before he slept Bartholomew himself should be told all. This being firmly settled, it could hardly be very necessary for him to be guarded in this conversation with Miss Richmond. Perhaps frankness might have an influence that caution would fail to have; and frankness was always easy; while caution in the exactly right degree was often an extremely difficult thing.

So it was that George Kirkoswald came to tell the story of the past six months of silence, of suffering, of suspense, to Diana Richmond. He hardly mentioned Genevieve's name. 'It has been as if no word had ever been said between us,' George declared, 'and I have left her to judge of my conduct as she chose, knowing that she could never judge uncharitably of any human being.'

Miss Richmond listened very quietly, very attentively. Was there any compunction in her at all when George told her of the shock that her letter had given him—coming, as it had done, into the day that was to have been one of the happiest days of his

CHAPTER LI.

'LET JOY BREAK WITH THE STORM.'

'O sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,
Be sometimes lovely, like a bride,
And put thy harsher moods aside
If thou wilt have me wise and good.'

In Memoriam.

THAT same November afternoon closed in darkly and heavily ; a wide band of gleaming light stretched right across the outer sea-edge ; the sullen curtain above dropped its fringe into the silver. There was light shining somewhere—there is always light somewhere, be the day ever so dark where one sits drooping for the need of sun.

Though there was no sunshine at Netherbank, Genevieve was not drooping. She was sitting beside her father. The Prince was silent on his perch. The snow was thawing fast away ; great water-drops were trickling down from the eaves, making the ivy-leaves and the bare brown stems of the honeysuckle quiver under the heavy dropping. The sound of the gurglings and babblings of the tiny runlets came even to the fireside of the little room in the stubble-field.

'It is really like living in a tent,' Genevieve said, breaking in upon the long quiet. People do not care to talk who have only just come through the storm. The rush of the tempest is still in their ears, with the sound of the wind that swept them on to the rocks of fateful circumstance. They are glad to sit by safe fires, to brood in silence upon the danger overpast.

To Noel Bartholomew it seemed already as if the events of the morning had happened weeks ago. The anxiety had gone from his face, the nervous apprehensiveness from his manner. What apprehensiveness was left to him now was for his daughter. Had the pain passed from his soul only to fall into hers ? Her little irrelevant remarks did not deceive him. Her care to put on a pretty dress, to arrange a dainty tea-table, did not confuse his perception of things. The physiognomy of sorrow is unmistakable

‘Only I discern
Infinite passion, and the pain
Of finite hearts that yearn.’”

Kirkoswald’s pale lips parted :

‘Will you not spare me?’ he asked hoarsely. ‘This can do no good.’

‘I only wished to remind you that I have some ground to stand upon,’ said Miss Richmond, speaking in the same gentle tones.

‘And you mean to stand upon it?’

‘I do.’

Kirkoswald rose to his feet. ‘Then it will be better that I should say no more. . . . But let me ask you one thing. Will you tell me what is your motive for all this? I do not deceive myself for one moment by supposing that you still care for me.’

‘Then it will hardly trouble you if I tell you that I never did really care for you. I did not always know it; but I know it now.’

‘Then why—why, since you never cared for me enough to have suffered yourself from any deed of mine, why should you take pleasure in making me suffer? I cannot understand it. What is your motive? What do you wish to do? What do you wish me to do?’

‘I wish you to go and explain to Miss Bartholomew.’

‘Then assuredly you will have your wish!’ said George, offering his hand, and saying ‘good-day’ with something that it would be an understatement to call decision of manner.

* * * * *

Miss Richmond remained standing for a moment or two after Kirkoswald had left the house. Her white hands were clasped lightly, her eyes half closed, her brows knitted as if in perplexity. This was an expression seen on her face but rarely. Diana Richmond was seldom perplexed.

‘So far I am foiled again,’ she said, speaking half aloud. ‘Are they fools, all of them, that they will not see?’ . . . Then, while she still stood quietly there, the drawing-room door was thrown wide open again. A tall, white, fur-clad figure entered with a fine grace of bearing and movement, and bringing an element of some strong half-spiritual emotion into the atmosphere. ‘Miss Bartholo-

ness had struck her path ; and though she made no complaint, Genevieve knew that hope was dead or dying within her. Had George Kirkoswald forgotten Miss Craven ?

Had he forgotten other things ? What was he thinking ? How was he bearing now ? Was he still weary of endurance, was he still feeling weary of long silence, long restraint ? 'If you are weary, then I am not weary,' Genevieve had said, only a few weeks before. 'Could she say that same thing now ?' she asked herself ; and the answer was, 'No ; if he ask me now I must say I *am* weary, I am very weary, and my heart cries out unceasingly that you would put an end to its weariness.'

She had not seen George since the evening of the concert. It was only four days, but it was long enough for surprise, for pain—a pain which had been felt through all the other sorrows that had come thronging into the days. It was worse to bear because he had been so kind, so full of tenderness on that evening. All the strong passionate love within her had gathered itself up to meet the renewed shows of love in him. She had had a feeling of coming good, coming joy. Her soul had borne itself receptively. She had waited for a shower of blessing ; but instead there had been a very hailstorm of trials and wrongs and consequent sufferings. But the one help, the one countenance that would have given support above all others, had been wanting, and it was little wonder that all the other pain was understruck by emptiness and aching.

She had had no time to brood over these things in silence, and it was well that she had not. But there was time enough for a yearning between the pouring out of cups of tea, for a cry of unsatisfied love while arranging the cushions of her father's chair, and stooping to stroke the gray tired head that seemed to be bowed with a new pathos every time she looked at it. She had put his cup of tea on her own little table by his side, the rain was still rattling wildly on the window-pane ; mingled with its dashing there was a sound of quick footsteps, of a sharp, decided knocking ; Keturah's voice was answering George Kirkoswald.

He came in, seeming now, as always, to fill the narrow room : to fill it with strength, and power, and protection against all harm and ill. It was impossible that any shadow of doubt, of distrust,

The old look of weariness had taken the place of the expectancy that had been visible on Bartholomew's face all the afternoon.

'No,' he said, in answer to Genevieve's remarks; 'no, it is not that. It is nothing so painless as that. He is delaying to come because coming can only be painful. I wish he knew that I am prepared!'

Next morning brought a little hopefulness, as morning almost always does; but as the day wore on it died down again, dying into perplexity, into some inevitable soreness of heart. It was nothing to Kirkoswald; at any rate, it was very little. The man was busied with his own affairs; his free, fine outdoor life lifted him up above the small strains and stresses of ordinary existence. It was not to be expected of him that he could understand that great and sudden quietness which had come down into the little sitting-room at the mere offer he had made. . . . Then all at once Bartholomew turned round upon himself with blame and contempt and self-reproach. He was undeserving of that last and best good, a true, unswerving, and loyal friend.

The night had been a sleepless one for him; his heavy eyes, his wan thin face, told of an ever-increasing sleeplessness. And sleep during the day was impossible to him; nevertheless, he consented to go and lie down for awhile, if Genevieve would be obedient, and consent to go for a walk. Then, if Kirkoswald came, or Dr. Armitage, Bartholomew would be there to receive him.

Genevieve went out reluctantly. It was just after their early dinner. The day was cold and uninviting; the land looked dreary; the long reedy marsh stretched darkly away round the curve of the upland. She had put on her long paletot of warm white fur, and her little oval white fur hat, yet she could hardly help shivering at first as she met the keen breeze that was coming up from the north, sweeping over the bent and broken sedges that were grouped so gracefully together in the standing pools. A few lean startled yearlings looked up with wondering brown eyes as she passed; the water-wagtails went skimming about. A blackbird was thrusting his yellow bill into a tempting scarlet rose-hip.

Genevieve had less mind than usual for these things to-day. The worn hopelessness of her father's face haunted her as she went

Market Studley. He told me to tell you that it might be afternoon to-morrow before he found his way to Netherbank.'

There was a pause. Genevieve was sitting in her own low chair with the firelight on her face; her hand was on the arm of her father's chair.

'I suppose Dr. Armitage would tell you more than that?' she said, looking up at George, with the recollection of the storm and terror of the morning in her eyes, and speaking with a pathetic vibration in her voice.

'Yes,' replied Kirkoswald, the look of compression coming back to his lips swiftly, and the lines on his forehead drawing themselves together in a way that was curious to see. 'Yes, he told me more than that; he told me all that a discreet doctor might tell even to his patient's closest friend. He had evidently made up his mind how much he might say, and how much he must leave unsaid, and no indiscretion of mine tempted him beyond his line. I dare say I didn't use as much judgment in putting my questions as I might have done. I was too—too much surprised.'

'You will find yourself more at liberty here,' said Bartholomew, looking up quietly, openly. 'There is nothing in this matter that need be kept secret from you.'

And nothing was kept secret, nothing but the terribleness of the strain of actual want, the long-continued insufficiency of food, and the distressing pressure caused by a few small debts. All else was laid open, disclosed without exaggeration, without bitterness, but with every expression of a keen surprise, a still keener perplexity.

'It is the absence of motive, or, rather, the obscurity of motive, that exercises me,' said Noel Bartholomew.

'Everyone who knows the story will explain it for himself,' interposed Genevieve. 'And the general explanation will be that the pictures have not given satisfaction.'

'Will it be considered a satisfactory way of expressing dissatisfaction, the sending of the pictures back again without a word of previous warning?' asked Bartholomew; 'the sending a man to put them down at the painter's door before the day had fairly broken?'

changing colour in spite of all effort. Then she paused awhile. When she spoke again there was a new calmness on her face. 'Let me be candid, since you thank me for coming,' she said. 'Perhaps if I had met Mr. Kirkoswald I should not have come. I think his errand and mine would be the same.'

'His errand!' Miss Richmond exclaimed, looking up as if she were rather at a loss. 'Oh! you are alluding to the little affair between your father and Cecil.'

Then, with an exquisite turn of her shapely head, Miss Richmond let her eye fall upon the velvet-covered table that was between Miss Bartholomew and herself. Genevieve's eye naturally followed hers. The morocco case, with George Kirkoswald's photograph, was lying there open; the letter that Diana had read aloud was open also, and close to Genevieve. The merest glance at that distinctive handwriting was enough. Two small heaps of letters were carelessly spread out behind.

'Do you think that a good likeness?' Miss Richmond said, handing the case to Genevieve. It was a little foreign case, with pockets for cartes-de-visite.

'I do not know if it is good,' Genevieve said simply. There was a mist before her eyes. It was not the mist of tears, and it passed away in a moment or two. 'I hardly know if it is good,' she repeated. 'It seems to have been taken some time ago, when Mr. Kirkoswald was young.'

'When he was young!' exclaimed Miss Richmond, laughing a low, cool, deliberate laugh. 'Oh, that *is* good! I must tell him that! . . . It was taken a month after we were engaged. There are two others in the pocket which he had taken afterwards in Paris. I do not like them. You can look at them if you care to do so. I never care to look at photographs myself. They either tell one nothing, or something that is not true. If I had seen George's photographs before I saw himself, I should never have cared for him. There is such a look of sternness, one might almost call it hardness, about his mouth when it comes to be photographed, and a certain expression, half disdainful, half what I call consequential, which he undoubtedly has sometimes, but very seldom. Why should it always come out in a photograph?'

Was Miss Richmond soliloquizing in mercy, in malevolence, in

this matter is unavoidable now; in the name of the common rights of humanity it is unavoidable. . . . Forgive me for saying, perhaps prematurely, that action is my duty as well as my privilege.'

There was another pause.

'I think I agree with you that some movement is desirable,' said Bartholomew, who had recovered himself, and was leaning forward with his hands clasped in the old way on the arm of his chair. 'I had resolved upon some step. I thought of you first; then I thought of Montacute, the lawyer at Thurkeld Abbas. You will know him? Years ago we were friends in a certain sense. I know him to be an upright man.'

'As upright as a pillar of granite, and as hard.'

'Is that your view of him? It was never mine,' said the artist. 'I thought him human above all the lawyers I had ever known. I have a firm impression that in this matter he would deal humanly.'

'What could he do?'

Bartholomew smiled. 'I know no more than a child what he could do. But I know that if skill or knowledge could avail, these things would not be wanting. Do you know Montacute at all? He used to amaze me. I always thought of him as a man who could twine an Act of Parliament round his little finger with a smile. But it would have had to be a very bad act. A right cause was safe in his hands always.'

Kirkoswald did not reply at once. After a time he said, 'Perhaps I do not know the man as you know him. Our affairs have always been in the hands of Waterland of Market Studley; and, of course, I have left them there. Once or twice Mr. Montacute has had to do with matters of ours that were involved, as legal matters always are involved, and I have never known aught of him but the uprightness you speak of. All the same, he impressed me as having an immense and intense inflexibility.'

'Uprightness must always be inflexible.'

'True! And, of course, you neither desire nor require deviation. All you want is justice, or rather equity; but the latter is more difficult of obtainment than the former.'

The poor artist closed his eyes wearily. He would have been

She went out almost silently, hardly knowing the way she took. The great gates clanged into their places again ; some sheep were bleating rather piteously on the moorland above. A big brown retriever came out from among the bushes, and looked up into the sad human eyes that were passing by as if he divined all the sadness, and all its meaning ; but the girl took no notice of him. She noted nothing. She went hurrying on.

Five minutes after she had left the drawing-room at Yarrell, Miss Richmond sent Kendle out to find her, to bring her back ; he was to desire her earnestly to come back for a moment or two. But Kendle was unable to overtake Miss Bartholomew. The man imagined that she had gone by the moor, but she was nowhere on the upland. She had gone homeward as she had come, by the dead, dark, marish weeds.

All the way she went by the dark marishes. The wintry twilight was coming down quickly, icily. A lurid crimson flush was fading in the west. The trees stood still, the withered drooping sedges were still, the birds were silent. One great pale star stood shining in the lonely heavens.

Presently she came to a road that crossed her path, a road that led down from Usselby into Soulsgrif Bight. Once, not so long ago, she had been passing through the marsh in the early morning, singing as she went out of the gladness, the lightness, the fulness of her heart, making for herself a little tune to the words that were ringing in her ears :

‘I must not scorn myself, he loves me still :
Let no one dream but that he loves me still.’

Surely it was but yesterday ! She had been singing aloud, freely, gladly, unrestrainedly. Then, suddenly, at the turn of the road she had met a tall, stern figure close at hand. He had heard, that was evident, and the gay glad song of assurance had turned to a silent and painful blush of maiden shame.

Surely it was but yesterday ! And now. . . . Now the girl stood by a stunted blackthorn bush and held it so that the thorns passed into her hand till the pain was greater than she could bear. So she kept back the tears that would have betrayed her soul’s anguish to her father.

Then, again, she went rapidly on by the dim ways ; and as she

coral-tinted walls, the pretty bright chintzes, the few ornaments, the many evidences of artistic instincts and occupations. Genevieve had on a dark, warm-tinted dress which made her look fairer than ever; and her lovely shining hair seemed to light up the place where she sat. Kirkoswald could almost see the tired look fading away from her face. The sunniness came back to her spirit; the little quick, bright sayings that he loved so much to hear fell from her lips as they had been used to do. It was as if months of dreariness and weariness had been blotted out in the sudden warmth of this new and unspoken understanding.

Even Bartholomew felt and understood something of it; the influence came to him as an alleviation. If the morning had been dark, surely the evening was bright and good; surely it held a promise of brightness and goodness to come.

It was like listening to music, to something that had opened with crashing chords, and wild clanging dissonances. Then, when the brain was wearied, and the ear deafened and pained to the uttermost, all had changed.

Here was a sweet fireside song; a few bars of a restful, mystic harmony which soothed like a wind-harp, and had power to uplift as well as to tranquillize. The parting words were said to this accompaniment.

When Kirkoswald had gone the music fell a little, the strain had loneliness in it, the last cadence dropped into the moaning wind, and went sighing across the rain-swept fields sadly, tremblingly.

CHAPTER LII.

'THUS I ENTERED, AND THUS I GO.'

'Bear up, my soul, a little longer yet;
A little longer to thy purpose cling.'

WORSLEY'S *Odyssey*.

GEORGE KIRKOSWALD looked very resolute as he walked over the corner of Langbarugh Moor that frowned darkly between Usselby Hall and Yarrell Croft. It was the day after the day that had

body. It is not suspicion ; it is knowledge, new knowledge of the world, of life, of all things—the good glad life that I have so delighted in, the beautiful world that I have loved so keenly. Oh ! try to see it—try to see it for what it is ! Believe certainly that it—

“ ‘Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help from pain.’ ”

But, there, I am preaching to you, when you should be preaching to me. Come and preach to me, but not to-morrow, not for a long time ; not for a long, long time. Then come and say something to help me, come and say anything you will.’

She discerned the change in Mr. Severne’s voice when he spoke again, the intonation of disappointment.

‘I am not to come to Netherbank at present ?’ he asked.

‘Come in the morning,’ Genevieve said, still speaking as if she hardly knew the thing she uttered. ‘Come and try to make me good as you are ; help me to bear trouble as you bear it. Be my brother, and be very wise, and be very patient, and be good to me—oh, be good to me ! There is no one else—my father must not know. There is no one else who may see me weak, and wilful, and overpowered in the fight as you may.’

There was a pause. A good many thoughts were passing through Mr. Severne’s brain ; and if there was effort in the next remark he made, there was for him no irrelevancy.

‘Perhaps I ought to have told you before that Mr. Kirkoswald is with your father,’ he said, as if the remembrance had just struck him.

‘He is there now ? Good-bye, then. And come again when you care to come. And when you come, be true ! be true ! If the world may have one true thing in it, oh ! be true !’

Genevieve went swiftly across the stubble-field. There were lights in the cottage windows, the ivy dropped in long clustering sprays ; the birds flew out tremulously. The one lonely star was still shining ; an unspoken cry went far beyond it, a cry for help in the sore strife—only for help that she might not fail, help that she might be strong for the moment, help that she might not betray herself in the presence of him who had betrayed her life’s whole faith, its utmost trust, its last bound and possibility of love. ‘Help for a little while !’ she said, ‘and then,

himself always, never dreaming of referring any decisive motive to the well-dressed and well-contented young man who was teaching bagatelle to three pretty frilled and flounced girls in the recess by the window. George watched him wonderingly, and somewhat compassionately. 'It was not Cecil's doing, that act of yesterday morning,' he said to himself as he sat listening to Mrs. Aylmer's advanced views on feminine suffrage. He listened patiently for awhile; then, hoping that he had done all that was required of him, he went away.

He was in considerable perplexity as he went; his disappointment was not his only.

Should he go down to Netherbank for the purpose of explaining that an untoward chance had hindered him from fulfilling his intentions? It seemed hardly worth while to risk the producing of a depressing effect when, in all probability, he would be able to go down on the following evening with relief on his lips, and satisfaction. He would have been glad enough to go down, so glad that he looked for selfishness in his desires, and seemed to find it. Since he could take down with him nothing to put an end to any pain, or any sore feeling, then why need he go at all? He would wait. Waiting was difficult; so surely it would be right and wise.

He was in a different mood when he entered the drawing-room at Yarrell on the following afternoon; and Miss Richmond was in another mood also. He was prepared for a sterner strife, a more prolonged effort, than he had at first anticipated. Thinking over things in the silence of the night, he had come certainly to the conclusion that Diana Richmond was prepared for conflict of some kind.

As was natural to her, she had in the first instance considered her dress carefully, not considering what would be the proper thing for a woman approaching middle age to wear in her own house as a morning dress. Such an idea would be the last likely to occur to her. It was not that she was ignorant—this by no means; but she was defiant, and had a passion for effective colour. This afternoon she wore a dress of richly tinted Indian silk, relieved by masses of dark, changeful velvet. There was some fine old lace round the throat, and an enamelled cross

In a very few minutes Genevieve came down. She was passing into another mood now. There was a calmer and stronger look on her face, a look as when one recognises a new condition of things that changes all the old for ever; and, though she was still pale, her paleness was not pallor, as it had been. She had put on a pink dress, rather a gayer dress than she would have chosen to wear under the thatched roof if her store had not been getting low; but she had chosen it to please her father—partly to please him, and partly for that inscrutable reason which not even a woman can define, but which is nevertheless existent; a reason that makes itself felt most decisively in the negations of an absolute poverty. *Sartor Resartus* and modern æstheticism notwithstanding, the 'Clothes-philosophy' is as far from being understood as ever.

A woman does not need to understand it; it is enough for her, and often more than enough, that she has clear instincts. Genevieve's own instincts were very clear, but she did not always obey them, and they were used to being thwarted. The fact that she was unusually well-dressed this evening was supporting rather than annoying, as under other circumstances it might have been. She had brushed her yellowrippling hair into a more careless and artistic arrangement; her deep, dark eyes were bright, and expressive of new and inexplicable meanings. Her gracious and graceful ways were filled with a new intensity. Every moment seemed to be a moment of fuller life—fuller meaning than the last. It was as if you could hear the life of the hour as the flame of existence went upward.

'And now tell me where you have been this afternoon?' her father said, when Keturah had finally disappeared. 'The scolding I promised you shall remain in abeyance, since you do not seem to be the worse for your four hours' walk. . . . You have been listening to Wilfred Stuart's violin—of that I feel assured. You look as if you were listening to it yet.'

'Will you ask him to come and play for me to-morrow?'

'Then you have not been there?'

'No; I have not been there. . . . *I have been to Yarrell Croft.*'

There was a noticeable silence; each man had his fears.

perception will enable you to see why he could not come on such an errand, even supposing that he had been well enough to do so. You will have heard of his illness?'

'I heard yesterday that he was ill. I heard this morning that he was walking in the field near his house.'

'Probably. All the same, the attack was a serious one. Dr. Armitage is of opinion that had Bartholomew been alone at the time he would not have recovered.'

'Poor man! . . . What was the cause of it?' asked Miss Richmond, using an inexpressiveness of tone and manner that was admirable under the circumstances.

Kirkoswald paused. How could he explain to a nature like this the depth, the intensity of the suffering endured by a man endowed as Bartholomew was endowed, with a temperament of such hyper-sensitiveness, that an idle or unthinking word would lower his mental tone for days? How could he make her see the intimate connection between such a man and his work—a connection so close that the mere careless mention of anything he had done would sting him like a cut with a fine lash? The difficulty of the task seemed insuperable.

'Since you ask me what was the cause of his illness, I must, of course, believe that you do not even guess. . . . It was the return of the pictures in a manner so unexpected, so inconsiderate, that struck him the blow from which he has not yet recovered, from which he may never quite recover.'

There was a noticeable pause before Miss Richmond smiled. She did, however, smile, and incredulously.

'How tragic!' she said at last.

George compressed his lips, and succeeded in his effort to be silent.

'What is that quotation one often sees?' Diana said; 'something like—

' "What great events from little causes spring!"

It used to be in one of my lesson-books.'

'Does this seem to you a little cause?'

'Eminently little.'

'The whole matter seems to you a small one?'

no wonder working in George Kirkoswald's brain. He was standing near the fire, resting one arm on the edge of the mantelshelf. His face was calm, and somewhat pale; his deep-set eyes were filled with heaviness, and pain, and perplexity. He lifted them as Genevieve came and stood before him. He was intensely conscious of the soft sweep of her dress, the droop of her shining hair, of the new tenseness of her every movement.

'Will you not sit down?' he said, placing her chair nearer the fire.

'No, thank you; I will stand,' she replied, clasping her hands with an apparent lightness, and letting them fall before her. 'It will not be for long. I have only a few words to say, and I perceive that it will be less difficult to say them than I had anticipated. . . . You are prepared for them?'

She spoke without bitterness, without hardness; but the effort she used was apparent in every breath she drew—in every intonation of every word. At the last she had almost failed in her utterance, yet she looked into the face before her coldly and steadily.

'I am not prepared for anything,' George replied, speaking with an emotion almost as evident as her own. 'I have been trying to prepare myself, but I have failed. . . . Of course, I know what it is that you want to say. You have learnt from Miss Richmond that once—some years ago—I was engaged to her. . . . I can only hope that she has told you the whole of the matter; not a part only. . . . And since you have heard her version of it, you will hardly refuse to hear mine; that is, so much of it as I can tell you?'

Genevieve stood listening to him, pale, patient, courteous.

'Pardon me! I have not heard Miss Richmond's version of the matter,' she said, speaking with dignity. 'And I would prefer not to hear yours. I should be glad—it would be a relief to me—if I might know no more than I know now. No peace could come of it. There could only be confusion, perplexity. Forgive me for saying that I have had enough of these.'

George stood looking silently into the fire for a few moments. Then he lifted his face and spoke again.

'It would be a pity if misunderstanding should deepen between us for the need of a few words,' he said. 'And since I know that

George was silent a moment. The colour had gone out of his face ; even his lips were pale.

'It will help to enliven a winter at Yarrell Croft,' he said, knowing that he sent his small arrow to the white.

'It will,' Diana replied. 'I was dreading the tedium of the next four months.'

'And nothing will move you, nothing will touch you—not even Dr. Armitage's declaration that another such shock might be fatal?'

'That sounds very commonplace.'

Again Kirkoswald was silenced by hardness, elusiveness, impassibility. He broke the silence presently.

'Before I pass on to another matter,' he said, 'there are one or two small points that I should be glad to have explained. May I ask why you have not made some of these objections sooner—for instance, when the first picture was finished? You saw the size of it ; you must have had some idea of the value of it. Why did you not speak then?'

Diana smiled.

'This is new,' she said. 'It is a long time since I have been put through such a catechism as this.'

'You are not bound to answer my questions if you find them inconvenient.'

'Thank you ; then we will let the matter drop.'

'You wish it? You will not think of the pain you are causing? You will not even consent to any compromise?'

'Not now. . . . Since you know so much of the Bartholomews and their affairs, you will be aware that my brother wrote, endeavouring to effect a compromise?'

'Hardly that! I beg your pardon, but I believe that the letter was simply a request that Mr. Bartholomew would take the pictures back, and try to dispose of them.'

'That was an opening, of course,' said Diana.

'Then it should have been more straightforward.'

'A quality you do not lack.'

'Thank you ; I seem to need it at present.'

'I do not dislike it,' said Miss Richmond languidly. 'But you spoke of another matter. Will you not bring your straightforwardness to bear upon that?'

still, resolute look on the face before him. Was it possible that now, when explanation had been made, when all was confessed—repented of, when there was no longer any mystery, any doubt, any hindrance, was it possible that now he should find that he had touched the end—the end of his life's last hope and its best? This could not be : he went on pleading. Had he no perception of the fact that his persistence at that moment was a mistake? .

Did no voice whisper to him that Genevieve was still suffering under the first shock of finding suddenly that he had loved another—loved passionately, and with duration in his passion, for so Miss Richmond had implied in that quietly-uttered admission of hers?

Blow upon blow had fallen. Genevieve did not doubt anything he said now, but he had not denied aught that Diana Richmond had said ; he had merely added further facts. It was true that he had loved her—that he had loved her long ; and his love had changed, had died out utterly, leaving him capable of loving again with equal strength, equal passion—why not equal mutability?

That he could change, that he could love now one woman and now another, was not a thing that a nature like Genevieve Bartholomew's could recognise with light equanimity.

'I do not doubt one word that you have said,' she replied in answer to a question he had asked. She was still trying to speak quietly, dispassionately ; but she felt that her quietness was turning to stoniness by reason of the force it needed. 'I do not doubt you,' she said, 'and I do not blame you. I blame no one but myself.'

'Then, since you do not doubt me, what is it that is to come between us now?'

'I am hoping that nothing need come between us,' Genevieve replied, lifting her beautiful face and raising her eyes to his, so that he could not fail to see the large sincerity written there. 'That was why I asked my father to leave me for awhile, that I might ask you to be to him all that you have ever been—a friend, a strength, a satisfaction. It may not be for long—I hope it will not. I mean to try to persuade him to leave this neighbourhood as soon as may be. Meanwhile will you come as usual? I ask it as a favour. Another thing that I would ask is, that you should say nothing to him of what has happened to-day.'

life? Did she perceive any desire to be honourable, to be patient, to do well and wisely in his long restraint, his long waiting for some light to show him the next step onward? 'I have seen so many lives, so many causes, wrecked by impatience,' he continued, 'that I set myself at all costs to wait, to do nothing that I should afterwards repent of having done. But, as I have said, I repent now of the thing that has seemed to me a virtue. You remember that day when I spoke to you in Soulsgrif Bight? I should have come to you again at a more suitable moment. . . . But regret is idle now. I have only to ask you to withdraw the letter you wrote to me, and to return mine. I think you will not refuse me now?'

Diana looked up with one of her most inexpressive looks on her face.

'And if I do refuse?' she said.

'Then I must tell you clearly and plainly that it will make no difference in my deed. I shall explain everything to Miss Bartholomew, and to her father, and abide by the result.'

With an exquisite grace of movement Miss Richmond rose and crossed the room. There was a davenport near the window which she unlocked, taking from it a packet of letters. Her diamond rings flashed, her dress rustled imposingly as she came back. George saw at a glance that they were his own letters that she had in her hand. He had prevailed. He sat down again quite silent in his belief, his satisfaction.

Another brief moment, and his emotion rose up tremulously. Miss Richmond had taken out two letters from the rest, and unfolded them. To his great dismay she began reading some passages aloud.

'“Believe me, my own queen, when I say that my love for you is as changeless as my love of life itself, and far more sweet to me,” she read in low, soft tones. “The days when I do not see you are dead, empty, divided days. When I am with you, holding your hand in mine, feeling secure of ‘the crown and comfort of my life, your favour,’ then, and then only, do I live any real life. Apart from you I have no vitality. All my old interests are dead, utterly dead. I cannot even take up the old books; if I do I find nothing in them. Do what I may—

'Can you imagine it?' she said. 'Can you ever imagine that I should dread anything Miss Richmond might choose to say? Is not my name as fair in the world's ears as Diana Richmond's name? Would not any word or deed of mine justify itself before men as readily as any word or deed of hers? Does one, then, live a blameless life for nothing? . . . I have never yet needed to dread the breath of slander and detraction; let me pray that I never shall!'

This was but an added sting. He might have known it all, he told himself; he might have trusted that so Genevieve Bartholomew would have met any possibility of being misunderstood. Having nothing to risk, nothing to dread, she could not have met it otherwise. So he argued now, not forgetting that he had used another argument not so long ago. Still, he had tried to do right. He could only say sadly, bitterly:

'I might have known it—I might have known it!'

'Yes; I think you might have known so much as that,' Genevieve said with quivering lips. 'Had I known how things were, I might have asked that you should have had faith in me.'

'I had faith in you. My error arose out of my not perceiving that a ten times larger faith would not have been misplaced,' George said, speaking with a new and more vehement earnestness. 'I perceived later. What I did not know then I know now. I know it now; and you say that it is too late. . . . But you will unsay it—you will unsay that one word. Let all else stand if you will, but not that; do not say that you cannot forgive—that you cannot forget. . . . You say that your love for me is dead; that cannot be—it cannot be. It may seem so to you, but it cannot be so. No true love dies, not here nor elsewhere. . . . Tell me, Genevieve, tell me that it was your pain—the pain I had caused you, that stung you into saying that.'

He had come a little nearer to her as he spoke; his eyes were lifted to hers, intense with yearning, with wistfulness, with an infinite humility. His lip trembled as he said the last sentence, which was so directly and closely near to the truth that Genevieve's eyes quivered under her eyelids as she heard it. Yet still the day's pain was upon her; it had struck through her whole being, warping her mental fibre, turning her from her better and

mew,' said Kendle, in his most pompous manner. Then he closed the door. The two women were left facing each other, greeting each other with smiles, and quiet, graceful courtesies.

CHAPTER LIII.

'AND TO MAKE IDOLS, AND TO FIND THEM CLAY.'

'Yet God thee save, and may'st thou have
A lady to thy mind,
More woman-proud and half as true
As one thou leav'st behind !
And God me take with Him to dwell—
For Him I cannot love too well,
As I have loved my kind.'

MRS. BROWNING.

THE quietness at Netherbank had not been broken during the two days which had passed since George Kirkoswald's offer of intervention. When the evening of the next day closed in, the day on which George had found the drawing-room at Yarrell full of people, Noel Bartholomew had betrayed a little expectancy, a little eagerness. Genevieve had opened the piano ; she had filled the big china bowl with fresh green moss, scarlet holly-berries, pale gold chestnut leaves. There were some ferns in a tall vase ; some rare engravings on the small table-easel. A friend of Genevieve's, Mrs. Winterford, had sent her some photographs from Venice ; they had only come by post that morning, and they were lying on the table, waiting to be talked over, admired. . . . Was it because no one came to admire them that the evening seemed so long, and that the quiet of it grew to be oppressive ?

'I hope Mrs. Warburton has not telegraphed for Mr. Kirkoswald again,' Genevieve said, gathering up the engravings and putting them back into the portfolio. The remembrance of the previous evening was in her eyes, it had been there all day, filling them with the glad, tender light of hope ; it lay under the white lids like a shadow now. It was after nine o'clock. There was no longer any probability that George would come down from Usselby.

the pictures?' Bartholomew asked when they had been sitting alone awhile.

'Nothing. When I knew that Mr. Kirkoswald had been there I did not say any more.'

'That was wise.'

'And you have made up your mind to see Mr. Montacute?'

'Yes: I am going over to Thurkeld Abbas to-morrow.'

'To-morrow, my father! Think of Dr. Armitage! He entreated you to be careful for a little while.'

'I am very careful. . . . I know what he meant; he meant that I was to keep quiet. I could hardly be quieter than I am; and I think this affair cannot harm me further. I don't know that I feel resigned, but I feel curiously regardless. . . . I shall simply take Montacute's advice, whatever it may be. I shall leave the thing in his hands entirely. Nothing could be less exciting.'

This seemed eminently reasonable; and her father's manner was so full of a new composure that she felt its influence upon herself through all the wild tumult that was surging within her. Though she sat there so calm, her heart was crying loudly. It was strange anyone could be quite near and not hear its crying.

It was Genevieve's doing that they sat so late. She worked awhile at her embroidery, talking all the time, thinking, suffering all the time; stitching down wild tender words with the pale silk that made the rose-petals, sending long leaf-lances charged with bitter repentance all across the dark gold ground. All her life through that piece of handiwork would stand for so many hours of restrained agony, of brave successful effort to smile, and talk, and read, and sing, as if no great darkness had come down to mar and cloud her life, while life should remain. Never again would that piece of tapestry have stitch put into it. The singing was hardest of all, but her father asked it of her, and she would not refuse him aught that might be done. It was no matter for the cost of the doing. 'Sing me *Robin Adair*,' Bartholomew said; and though every word struck through her brain with the sharpness of steel, she sang it to the end.

'Where's all the joy and mirth
Made this town a heaven on earth
Oh, they're all fled with thee,
Robin Adair!'

by field and farm ; the wrong, the oppression he was enduring, came back upon her with an almost overwhelming sense of its strangeness, its incomprehensibleness. A dozen words, if they might but be spoken, would at least make things straight and plain. If circumstance remained hard and bitter, it would surely be better to bear, being understood. Then a great desire came upon her strongly and suddenly. She was not so far from Birk-rigg Gill now. Why should she not pass through it, go up to Yarrell Croft, and speak with Miss Richmond face to face about this unprecedented thing herself?

The girl stood still a moment, turning from white to crimson in the working of her own strong emotion. She remembered that George Kirkoswald had undertaken to act as mediator, but it was not impossible that he had failed, as her father feared. 'I can find out if he has failed, or if he has succeeded ; and either way I can do no harm by calling,' Genevieve said to herself. 'I am not afraid of Miss Richmond ; she has always been courteous to me ; sometimes she has been kind ; and, though I do not understand her, I have always felt as if I wanted to understand her. I will go now. I will certainly go. It may be that I shall say nothing when I get there, but I will go and find if there is anything to be said.'

Her purpose gathered strength as she went on, and her impulse seemed no longer an impulse, but a sane and sensible measure, which she ought to have thought of much sooner. It seemed to her eminently probable that ten minutes of simple and kindly and straightforward conversation would explain everything, bring everything to a peaceful and satisfactory conclusion.

So it was that less than a quarter of an hour after George Kirkoswald had left the drawing-room at Yarrell Croft, Genevieve Bartholomew entered, with her strong purpose, her yearning human lovingkindness, written plainly on her face. Miss Richmond's eyes were radiant with the unexpected satisfaction.

'This is really kind of you, to come so far to see me on such a dull day,' she said with quiet cordiality. 'Come nearer to the fire ; take the chair that George has just left. . . . You would meet him?' she said with studied indifference. 'He has just gone.'

'Mr. Kirkoswald ! No, I did not meet him,' Genevieve said,

'My love that I said was dead!' she cried, in a subdued whisper, standing with clasped hands, in the moonlight that came streaming through the window in the roof. 'I said that it was dead, George; but I said it with lips that were cold and chill for the untruth they said. Forgive it, forgive it! It was my first untruth: it shall be the last. Come back and say that you forgive it; or come and say that you will not forgive it, that you will hold me in disdain for it always. Only come back again! Only come back again! You may look down on me, and scorn me, and be hard to me; you may crush me with a word, with a frown; you may strike me with that quick strong glance of yours, but never leave me. . . . George, George, George! how could you leave me?'

A long time she stood there; she could hear the faint gusty sighing of the wind as it came up out of the sea; she could hear the long low ceaseless roll of the waves at the foot of the cliffs. Nothing had changed. Nothing was as it had been before. Was she passing through some kind of dream or trance? Was it all a delusion that had been sent to her to test her strength? Would she wake up to-morrow, and find that she had had a vision in the night, a vision of darkness, of pain, of love's bereavement—a vision sent to witness to the value and meaning of love? To-morrow! It was to-morrow now; it was to-day; it was yesterday! There was no more any division of time; there was nothing but—

'One long dreary everlasting *now*!'

to be lived as human life may be lived when the wheel is broken at the cistern; to be lived mutely, and desolately, yet always enduringly. That alone was left to be attained, a strong, silent, passionate endurance; acceptance of a life that no man nor woman might henceforth comprehend, that none might dare or care to comprehend. . . . This, then, was the thing that human beings called loneliness, one where two had been; a thick darkness where had been a great tender light; a coldness where had been a fervid, tremulous, palpitating warmth of love and life. This, then, was the dreaded thing that men named loneliness!

And again her wild cry was straitened to a whisper, as it went upward in the night.

utter indifference? Genevieve did not know. Had something struck her? wounded her? taken her strength? Was she blinded? Had some sudden madness touched her brain, filling her soul with a sickening, crushing, cruel delusion?

She rose to her feet, white, pallid as the garment she wore. Her great dark violet eyes were dilated till they seemed as if they saw nothing. She stood there tall, and still, and stricken.

'Is it true, what you say?' she asked, speaking in a strange, quiet, yet bewildered undertone.

Miss Richmond rose, too; for the moment she was half alarmed, and she stood there asking herself what was the worst, the utmost thing she had said. . . . That utmost thing was true, true to the last letter; and she said so, regretfully, as if the thing gave her pain in the utterance.

Genevieve grasped the back of her chair. She was still standing, still pale and motionless. She had no power to move. She was not thinking; she was only trying to stand strong and firm for the moment, without losing consciousness, without betraying herself. She hardly knew that her wide beautiful eyes were slowly filling with tears; she made no effort to check them. Her lip quivered with the word that came.

'You know that I am hurt?' she said in a simple, childlike way, speaking as if in the stunning blow she were moved to turn for sympathy to the hand that had dealt the blow.

Miss Richmond made no reply. She, too, was pale, and there was a look of controlled disquietude on her face. The strife of good and ill was strong within her at that moment. She had been prepared for the infliction of pain when the moment came, but not for such a manifestation of pain as this.

Genevieve was still standing before her, the tears still in her eyes, as if the chill of her heart had frozen them there for ever.

She was looking through her tears, beyond them, beyond the purple hills that bounded the horizon. Was she trying to look beyond and behind this hour that had so surely struck its darkness through the hours to be?

'I must go,' she said, turning to Miss Richmond, and speaking as one who comes slowly back again to a life that has been suspended; 'I must go to my father.'

CHAPTER LVI.

' I HAVE MORE CARE TO STAY THAN WILL TO GO.'

' Peace breathes along the shade
Of every hill ;
The tree-tops of the glade
Are hushed and still ;
All woodland murmurs cease,
The birds to rest within the brake are gone.
Be patient, weary heart—anon
Thou, too, shalt be at peace !'

GOETHE.

COULD it really be said that Genevieve awakened to her sorrow when the morning came? Had she slept? Is it sleep to lie conscious of pain—conscious with a benumbed yet intense consciousness that cannot strive nor cry, that cannot gauge the depth of one's anguish, that cannot turn from it, that cannot bring one thought to alleviate it ; that can only lie stirless, helpless, confused with all hurrying irrelevant confusions, tortured and exhausted by all dark and impossible complications. . . . Is this to sleep?

If it be not sleep, neither is it waking. Dreams come, lights and shadows fall, voices cry out of the darkness, figures flit to and fro. The dream-world is as the waking world. One wild disquiet pervades and dominates them both.

There was a new tenderness in Genevieve's manner when she came downstairs. He was there then, her father! He was not lying prostrate on some dark plain as she had seen him in the night. He was there, and he was speaking, smiling quietly ; he was not silent, with his face downward upon his arm. Ah, how she had striven in her unrestful sleep to raise that gray fallen head ! Her arm was yet aching with her striving, aching as if it would ache for evermore with the vain effort. She might well stroke the gray hair lovingly, and kiss the pale lips tenderly. He was there. Though all else was gone, she had her father.

It was a wild, bleak morning. Dark rain-clouds were moving heavily above the moorland ridge. Though you had no sadness of your own, the sadness that was upon the land was sufficient

went there came to her, like an echo from afar, some words that Canon Gabriel had spoken one evening to the people in the music-room at Soulsgrif Bight. He had been speaking of St. Peter, of his attempt to walk on the waves to his Master, walking as on the earth till he had looked round upon the wild waters that were raging on every side. Then his faith had failed. Had he looked stedfastly at the Master only, he had never felt himself beginning to sink.

It was so in many a crisis, the Canon had gone on to say in simple words. A man's sole chance of outliving the storm might lie in his ability to look above and beyond the terrible stress of it. . . . The truth, the help of this came mercifully just now when it was wanted. She would not look, she would not think, not yet, not till strength came for looking and thinking. . . . Would it ever come? A chill, sighing gust of wind came up from the sea through the gathering darkness; it went away up to the moor, carrying with it a half-uttered cry, 'Will it ever come? Will it ever come? Will there ever again be any life to be lived with desire for life's continuance?'

She reached the stile at Netherbank at last. Mr. Severne was just coming away from the cottage. He stopped for a moment, half surprised, wholly pleased.

'I beg pardon, but I don't think you ought to be out so late on these cold evenings,' he said, when his greeting was done, speaking kindly, tenderly as a brother might.

'Do you care?' Genevieve replied, speaking in strange new tones, tones that were a little excited, a little wild. 'Do you care, do you still care? I wonder that you should care so long. But, perhaps, it is only seeming, only mockery. I could understand that. I cannot understand in any other way.'

Mr. Severne could hardly see her face in the darkness; but he could not fail to recognise some change, some development of life's fitful fever. Was it her father's trouble that was trying her thus?

'What makes you suspect me of insincerity?' he asked, speaking gently, yet breathing more quickly under the intensity of his own emotion.

'I don't suspect you more than others. I don't suspect any-

A great sadness came down suddenly into the girl's face, a great weariness into eyes that had been weary before. This was no time to urge the plan that she had had in her brain last night, to explain her desire that they might leave the neighbourhood of Murk-Marishes as soon as it was possible to leave it, and come back to it no more, neither together nor apart. Had she desired it? Did she desire it now? Was not the sigh that she checked almost a gasp, almost a sob, a stifled protest against the idea of leaving Netherbank for one hour of one day?

Her first impulse—she had all but acted upon it—was to put her hand gently, entreatingly, upon her father's arm, to say, 'I cannot go to Havilands. I cannot go away from here. You will not insist, you will yield this once, you will be good and kind to me as you have always been, you will not ask me to go away?'

Then, glancing at the white weary face, remembering all the strain, the fret, the pressure of the life he had lived of late, that he was living now, her heart smote her with her own selfishness. What could be better than that he should go for awhile? Even to have some change, some stir to look forward to, would be good for him and right for him. What was there in her own life that she should think or care for the comings or the goings of it? Havilands or Netherbank, what did it matter, since one step would be upon the cornfield no more? So she asked herself, straining her ear intently for the step that might fall there at any moment.

But it did not fall. Her listening was in vain. Her yearning, beating, impassioned heart might as well have been still. If any other heart was beating in response, there was Langbarugh Moor frowning darkly between; and the black stony upland was a small barrier to that raised by one false forbidding glance.

Only a glance, only one cold word following the glance, and that word—

'Not from the heart beneath—
'Twas a bubble born of breath,
Neither sneer nor vaunt,
Nor reproach nor taunt;'

yet potent for ill as is the keen sword-edge that divides life from life in some unlooked-for moment.

'We will go if you wish it, father,' Genevieve said; 'but I need

then I will lie still. All my life long I shall need only to be still . . . still between dawn and dark, still between dark and dawn . . . nothing can break the stillness.'

CHAPTER LIV.

A FIRESIDE SCENE.

'Courage, my soul !
Play thou the heroine's part for one half-hour
And ever after take thy woman's way.'

Philip Van Artevelde.

GENEVIEVE went into the little lamplit sitting-room. Her father was there, leaning forward in his chair in the old wearied way. George rose quickly to place another chair for her. Then all at once with a great rush there came back upon her brain the reasons she had had for going to Yarrell Croft, the weeks of pain, the unanswered letters, the returned pictures. Was it possible that she had forgotten—even for an instant? When she realized that for nearly two hours she had never once thought of all this strange trouble that had fallen into her father's life, her forgetfulness, her seeming selfishness, smote her like a treachery ; and the fact that she had been pre-occupied became a motive for such strong self-blame that her mind was for a moment drawn away from the thing that had caused pre-occupation.

She sat there quite still, quite silent, while George told of the unsuccessfulness of his visit. He did not go into details or repeat Miss Richmond's words. He confined himself almost entirely to an admission of the fact that he had failed in his enterprise, and to a few remarks expressive of surprise at his failure. As he spoke he was watching Genevieve with even more than usual intentness, and with some concern. He had detected the change that a few hours had written on her face.

Her father's eyes were not undiscerning. 'Change your dress, dear, and be as quick as you can—tea will be here in ten minutes. Then I shall scold you ; and after that I shall make out a list of distances which you may not pass. You are exhausted. I can see that plainly.'

But I would not die, no, I would not die; nor would I care to sing so, to 'build up all my sorrow with my song,' unless I knew that my song might reach and touch him who made the sorrow. . . . Did he make it? . . . Was it his doing? Was it mine? Is there any undoing? . . . George, George! if I built up my sorrow, if I built it into poem, or picture, or book, and if it made you see, then would you relent? Would you unsay that word? Would you come back and hold out your hand to me again with that tender look on your face, and that greater tenderness in your voice, that was there only yesterday? . . . But I may not do it. I have no art nor talent to use for winning you back. I have only love, only a true, strong love. You said certainly that love that is true does not die here nor elsewhere; then why leave a living love like mine to live on for ever in pain? You had wounded me—you or another. You had hurt me, and crushed me, and in my agony I cried out; but you might have known that I cried untruly, as men have done on torture wheels not worse than mine. Now that I recall the thing I said, is it possible that you will not hear me? Is it too late? Are you hardening yourself in your pride? Is that look growing on your face that *she* spoke of yesterday, speaking as one who had full right to speak, to speak admiringly or slightly, as a woman may when she is sure. Ah, how it struck me, and crushed me! . . . And yet, yet you will not understand; I feel and know in my heart that you will not understand—

“And from that time to this I am alone,
And I shall be alone until I die,”

because you will not understand. It is oppressing me more with every hour that goes by, the feeling that you will not stoop again to put your hand in mine, to look into my eyes and see there that the bitterness born of a moment's delirium has gone for ever.'

While Genevieve was thinking, striving, passing from suffering to suffering, her father was going slowly by field and road to Thurkeld Abbas, missing Mr. Severne, who was going to Netherbank, by the way. No agitations beset Bartholomew as he went; the gray day did not sadden him; the tossing trees awoke no chord of desolateness in his heart or brain. He was quiet. 'I am quieter than I remember to have been these twenty years,' he

'You are a very curious child,' said Bartholomew presently. He looked up with a grave look on his face as he spoke. 'Now and then I feel moved to a fresh thankfulness that you are so good. If you had not been good you would have been——'

'Very bad?'

'No; but very troublesome, because so incalculable. I never seem to know what you will do next.'

'Do you ever fear?'

'No; I do not need to fear. . . . But all the same, tell me what took you to Yarrell Croft?'

'An impulse.'

'That, of course; and the impulse concerned the pictures; that, of course, also. How long had Mr. Kirkoswald been gone when you got there?'

'About a quarter of an hour,' said Genevieve, looking up at George with a direct and unflinching gaze, which he perceived to be not without bitterness, not without sadness, not without a consummate disdain. It was only a look, but an entire revelation was in it. He knew now that there was nothing left to be revealed by him. Was his cup full at last?

'I need hardly ask any more questions,' Bartholomew said, clasping his hands wearily on the arm of his chair. 'If you had had any message of peace you would not have kept it till now. . . . Let the matter drop, then; let us be for this one night as if it did not exist. . . . Perhaps I have been foolish—stupid. I think I feel a little as if my brain were overgrown by the mosses of Murk-Marishes.'

'Would it enliven your brain if you were to go and have a cigar in the kitchen, father? Think how long it is since Keturah has had the pleasure of your company—and your smoke; and remember how she delights in the latter.'

'Which you do not?'

'Not indoors; but out of doors, as you know, I can endure to any extent.'

'I perceive you wish me to go.'

'Which does credit to the acuteness of a moss-grown perception.'

Bartholomew went away, wondering not a little; but there was

to you. By so doing he gained an air of imperturbability that would have been priceless to some men. He remembered Bartholomew distinctly; indeed, he slightly resented the idea that forgetfulness had been possible.

'I seldom forget a name; I never forget a face,' said the old man, with considerable dignity of tone and manner. Then he sat down in a very upright chair, and listened to all that Bartholomew had to say. Now and then he interrupted the artist to ask a question, but very seldom. He was evidently gathering up his mind to precisely the same conclusion as other people had gathered theirs. The pictures had not been approved. 'It is an awkward affair,' he said, keeping the imperturbable side of his face toward Bartholomew, 'and, pardon me, I must say that I think you were careless in the first instance. You should undoubtedly have made some more definite agreement.'

'I perceive that now,' replied the artist quietly. 'But I can only say for myself that I have not been accustomed to make binding agreements. I have received many commissions. Nine times out of ten people have named a price which they did not wish me to exceed. I need hardly say that in no case have I ever touched the extreme limit, however narrow that limit might be. When no price was fixed, I have understood that it was immaterial.'

'I should say that it was quite immaterial in this case,' rejoined Mr. Montacute.

'Then what should you consider to be Mr. Richmond's motive for the course he has taken?'

'Ah! there I cannot answer you,' said the old man, turning his expressive eye searchingly upon the painter. 'There I cannot answer; but I should have thought that you would have arrived at some conclusion yourself on that point.'

Bartholomew was silent. He had arrived at nothing that would bear the definiteness of words. Was his hope failing him a little? Was this professional questioning, this cautious answering, quite what he expected? What had he expected? He hardly knew. He was beginning to wish that he had not come, that he had set himself to bear his wrong, not seeking such redress as might or might not be found in English law or equity.

I have been to blame, since my error has struck me in a way I never expected it to strike, you will let me speak for myself. A criminal may do that.'

He went on to speak; he told the story of his life's mistake as it had repeated itself to him on that day when he had received Diana Richmond's letter. Then he spoke of the letter itself, and of all that had happened since of his own silence, his own suffering, his own suspense; last of all, of his own love—his passionate, yearning, unresting love.

'Such love is not so common in the world,' he said, 'that a man or woman should trifle with it when it is given. You shall find a thousand lives that are being lived out to the last without once for one hour having been uplifted by such love as mine is for you. I have been to blame, but it is not until one has erred, and deeply, that one finds—

' "The want of one kind heart
To love what's well, and to forgive what's ill
In us."

And you must see that my error has been of the understanding. Is a man wholly responsible for the woven, tangled web he calls his life? But responsible or not, will you not take my life as it is?' the man said with a great tenderness breathing across his words. 'Will you not take it as it is, with all its past mistakes, its present imperfections? Will such a love as mine cover nothing? I tell you truly I have never loved before; not with any love of heart to heart, of soul to soul, of spirit to spirit. There is another love, which is of the senses wholly, and that love I have known; but I tell you in sorrow that I have known it only to wonder at it, to be perplexed, appalled by its unsatisfyingness, its incapacity to afford a man's soul one hour of any true rest or peace. Having known it thus, could I fail to know the higher love when it came? could I fail to bend before it in reverence—in a great and solemn and glad gratitude? My life since I have known you has been what it never was before, what it can never be again, if this day's event has wrought any change in a love I trusted would never change while life should last.'

So he pleaded; but even as he spoke his heart failed him, and a cruel burning flush of pain came over his face as he noted the

aside, gleams of wild, flitting sunlight shot through, bringing out the colours of the gray upland, the reds and yellows of the fractured scaurs on the moorland edge, the dark-green whin-brakes, the gray-white sheep, the verdant ivy that clung to the stems of the sparse trees. The smoke of the turf-fire up at Huns-garth Haggs was curling against a mass of blue-black clouds. A horseman was coming down the road, but the dappled gray was not Kirkoswald's. A moment later, Bartholomew perceived that it was Ishmael Crudas who was coming down from the Haggs; and he waited at the stile to pass a word or two with Miss Craven's faithful and patient admirer.

'Noo; what Ah's glad to see ya oot ageän!' shouted Mr. Crudas heartily, and with considerable satisfaction in his tone. He was dismounting, fastening his horse to the post at the side of the stile. 'Ah's comin' in,' he said. 'That is, if ya've neä objections?'

Bartholomew smiled his disclaim of objections. 'We shall be glad to see you. Come in and have some dinner. My daughter will be delighted.'

'Dinner!' exclaimed Mr. Crudas shrilly. 'Why, Ah's about ready for my tea. I allus gets my dinner atween eleven an' twelve. An' Ah's ready for 't an' all, Ah can tell you. When ya've had yer breäk'ast by five o'clock, a twelve-o'clock dinner comes neän ower sharp upon ya.'

'I should say not, indeed,' replied Bartholomew, opening the cottage door and leading the way into the little room, where the table was set in the dainty fashion observed at Netherbank.

Many a long day after that Mr. Crudas told of his amaze at finding a dinner-table decorated with 'a few bessy-bairnworts,* and cattijugs,† stuck into a bit o' moss; an' all manner o' bits o' breckon an' green ivin i' lang narra glasses i'steäd o' tumblers o' good yall.'

There was a jug of mild ale on the table which Mr. Crudas was asked to accept for his refreshment. Genevieve poured some out for him.

'Thank ya, miss,' he said. Then he put down his empty glass.

* Bessy-bairnworts = daisies.

† Cattijugs = rose-hips.

Kirkoswald could not mistake her meaning. Why would he not accept her proposition, or at least seem to accept it? Why, since he had waited so long, could he not set himself to wait and to watch for a little longer?

'I could not do what you ask,' he said, his voice faltering and breaking as he spoke. 'I have not strength enough for that. . . . Genevieve, have you forgotten? . . . Did I not tell you, did I not warn you, that your faith in me might be tried to the uttermost? It has been tried to the uttermost, I know. . . .'

'And beyond,' said Genevieve, with trembling, vibrating tones in her decisive words. 'Beyond the uttermost; and it endured to the last. . . . Is it my doing that it has been suddenly struck dead?'

'And your love with it?'

'And my love with it.'

There was a long silence in the little room. George turned and buried his face in his hands. The fire burnt low; the lamp was dim. Genevieve still stood by the table, growing paler and paler, feeling the gulf growing wider and wider. It had widened with every wild unwilling word she had uttered; yet it was as if every sentence impelled her to the utterance of another that should be more final, more determined, more pitiless than the last. What was it that had come upon her? What strange perversity? What unprecedented and wayward inexorableness? Had George turned at that moment, had he taken her hand in his and drawn her to his side with tender force, he had met with little resistance.

Her love dead! It had never yearned and trembled toward him so passionately, so fervidly, as it did at that moment. Had it not been for that word that she had said she had fallen at his feet as he stood there, and she had cried aloud to him, and her cry had been for forgiveness.

He spoke again presently. The flush of pain had gone from his face; he was paler, stronger, calmer.

'Let me ask you one thing,' he said. 'Have you any fear now that Miss Richmond may carry out her threats? Do you dread that?'

Genevieve smiled. The question roused all the waywardness, the bitterness, in her again.

Dorothy. Noo, Dorothy wad mak' a viewsome pictur'. Paint her an' all if she'll let ya. Mebbe she weänt. She's as awk'ard as owt. She wants you to be talkin' tiv her ageän, Miss Bartholomew. She was as different as could be, one bit ; an' 'twas your doin', Ah know ; an' Ah got started wi' wall-papers an' things doon at Swarthcliff, an' all was gettin' smartened up nicely. But Ah've no heart to go on wi' sike things noo. . . . An' it's nowt but pride on her ; it's been nowt but pride all through.'

This was true, and Genevieve admitted as much ; but even pride was easier to understand now ; all things that might come in the way of a true and faithful and yearning love were easier to understand.

'It was not so much any word of mine that influenced Miss Craven,' Genevieve said. 'Circumstance did more to incline her toward yielding than I did. If she were more prosperous, she would be less reluctant.'

'Accordin' to mah waäy o' seein' things her troubles sud make her all the readier to gi' waäy. What for need *she* be frightened o' what folks says? If she cared for me as much as Ah care for her, she'd let 'em talk till they were tired, an' then begin again. Her Sunday clothes 'ud fit no worse, Ah warrant ya.'

Having given his commissions, and arranged about coming to sit for his portrait, Mr. Crudas went away. It was easy to see that he was not ill-pleased with himself and his idea. He went along the field-path swinging his arms, whistling awhile, then singing as he went. It was a verse of the old song that he sang always :

'He turned his face unto the wa',
And death was with him dealin' ;
Adieu, adieu, my dear friends a',
And be kind to Barbara Allan.'

truer, her wiser and tenderer self. When she saw a hand held out to take hers—held out in loving beseechingness—she lifted her eyes from it to George's face with something of disdain. Was it disdain? Could it have been aught else? Could it have been fear, for instance—fear of love's strong domination? George did not ask. Wounded, pierced to the very heart of him, he drew back.

'I will urge you no more,' he said.

And the reply came swiftly :

'Then I thank you.'

CHAPTER LV.

'IS ALL OUR FIRE OF SHIPWRECK WOOD?'

'Dearest, three months ago
When we loved each other so,
Lived and loved the same,
Till an evening came
When a shaft from the devil's bow
Pierced to our ingle-glow,
And the friends were friend and foe !'

R. BROWNING.

CONTINUALLY, and through all other sounds, Dr. Armitage's words were repeating themselves in Genevieve's hearing. 'Keep your father from mental disquiet,' he had said ; but it was not easy now to discern how far Noel Bartholomew might be suffering from disquietude. With every fresh turn of thought or event, it seemed to his daughter as if some noticeable degree of anxiety slipped away from him ; leaving him, not himself as she had known him of late, but a more tranquil and less sensitive self. He was not apathetic, but he was unconcerned, and his manner was as the manner of one freed from care for evermore.

All the evening, after George Kirkoswald went away, Genevieve set herself to the perfecting of a finer sympathy between her own mood and her father's. This was what was left to her ; and she knew it, and was not unthankful.

'Then nothing passed between you and Miss Richmond about

his despairing mood was passing on into some mood less wildly intolerable.

Only a few days had gone by—a few dark corroding days of isolation, of failure of heart, of crushing desolateness. This was the first day of anything that could be termed rebound, the first day of reawakened hopefulness. George did not know it for hopefulness. It seemed no more than resignation.

He had not forgotten Genevieve's request—not for a moment had he forgotten it. In making it she had made an acknowledgment that was priceless to him now.

'Be to him what you have always been—a friend, a strength, a satisfaction,' she had said; and the words removed from their context were of an abiding value.

'If I may be her father's friend, it can hardly be that she will count me her own enemy,' he said, with a feeling akin to contentment.

Nevertheless, the first moment of meeting had little of contentment in it. The December twilight was coming down; Genevieve sat alone in the little sitting-room by a bright pinewood fire. She was lying wearily in her father's chair, the Prince was chirping fitfully, the yellow rose-tree was dropping its petals, the clock was ticking with audible monotony.

She knew the footstep, the knock upon the door. Her heart, which had been beating so faintly, stood still.

'I am sorry my father is out,' she said, standing there tall and straight, and beautiful and cold. 'But he will not be long. He has only gone down to the village to see a poor man who is ill. If you can wait a little, it will be a pleasure to him to find you here.'

Though he knew her so well, he was yet half amazed at the strength-in-weakness that was so visible in her voice and manner. And he perceived for himself that the half of her strength was the strength that is always in truth. It was indeed of her father that she was thinking.

'Certainly I will wait,' George Kirkoswald said, seating himself in the chair she had indicated in her graceful, courteous way. 'I was wanting to see you. Severne tells me that the Canon wishes to have the next concert in the schoolroom at Murk-Marishes. I suppose it will be well to have one there now and again?'

Her voice thrilled on, clear, sweet, penetrating; full of passion as of pathos. It was the song that George had liked best of all her songs, and the one she had liked best to sing to him. Was it possible that she would never sing it to him any more? Would no kind night-wind carry the words up the sloping fields, and away across Langbarugh Moor to Usselby? The wind had done so much as that for Wilfred Stuart; and the boy's path had been by still waters ever since. Might it not be again? Might it not so happen that George should be out on the moor—what so likely? and might not words of such pain and intensity reach even to him? 'Listen, listen,' she was saying underneath; 'listen.'

'What, when the play was o'er,
What made my heart so sore?
Oh, it was parting with
Robin Adair.'

Then she went on:

'But now thou'rt cold to me,
Robin Adair.'

Cold! he had been cold many a time—cold, and strange, and absent, and incomprehensible. And she had loved him through it all; and the coldness had been hardly a pain because of the faith and understanding that she had brought to meet it. . . . 'Oh, if he would but come back again, and be *only* cold to me!' the girl said, clasping her hands tightly together when the last chord was touched.

It was nearly midnight before she was alone in her own little room under the thatch. She moved about quietly for awhile, till her father should be asleep, throwing her pink dress aside, wrapping herself in a white dressing-gown.

'Anon she shook her head,
And showered the rippled ringlets to her knee.'

Would she ever take any pleasure in her golden hair again, since he who had so praised it would have no praise for her any more? That was his own word. 'Never any more.' Ah, why had she led him to say it? Why had she driven him to say it? What dark spirit of cruelty had entered into her to tempt her from herself, to tempt her from her love?

when a woman reminds me, with patient face and tearful eyes, that after a little while there will be neither cold nor hunger, nor any care.'

There was another pause—an interval lying between many things that might have been. Love, passionate love, that might have been one, was there divided. Recollection came across all emotion, and pride, and pain : striking, chilling, condemning.

The coldness of manner that comes of an exceeding great pain is a more severe coldness than any you shall find. The look on George Kirkoswald's face seemed an utterly ruthless look to the eyes that watched him. The blank pitilessness of it struck upon the girl's heart like a chill. An icy wind often gives strength to the fainting.

'Shall you come to the concert?' she asked, looking up at him with a look as calm as his own, and speaking in a voice free from any tremor of expectancy.

'No,' was the reply, made with an apparently studious carelessness. 'No, I am thinking of going to Cairo.'

It was twilight : he could not see the sudden pallor, the sudden look, as of one stricken afresh, that came into the girl's face. He could not gauge the silence to its last depth. One word of hers—one brief, sweet cry of pain, and he had been at her feet, craving forgiveness there, entreating passionately that she would resist the deathless love that was in him no more. Why did he wait for the cry, for the word, since he could only feel that the breathless silence was full of cries? Was he remembering that word of his own, 'I will urge you no more'? Was it her reply that was ringing in his ears so wildly, 'Then I thank you'?

The silence was broken by other sounds : there were noises outside in the twilight. Bartholomew had met Canon Gabriel by the sick-bed in the village ; Sir Galahad had failed to come for him at the time he had promised to come, so a message had been left—Mr. Severne was to bring the trap up to Netherbank. The Canon had been persuaded to come back with Bartholomew for a cup of tea.

'I expect you to make me a cup of very good tea,' said the old man, taking Genevieve's hands in both his own, and looking tenderly into her pale face.

'George, George, George! how could you leave me—how could you leave me to one lonely hour? Life had no loneliness when it was one with your life. Though you never came I was not alone. I could speak to you; and I knew that you heard, though you were leagues away. Now you hear no longer, for the spiritual ties are broken—broken by harsh words, and angry; and you cannot hear across the discords that sever your soul from mine. Words! What are they that they sever so? But you will hear words of mine no longer. I alone can hear. I alone can hear the useless thing I say. It cannot reach you where you are, for the strings are snapped, the strings on which your soul's music swept to mine, mine to yours. Yet let me say it again; let me say it once again: George, George, George! how could you leave me? How could you leave me to the madness of a love like mine?'

The winter night was half gone before she threw herself, wearied and exhausted, on the little white bed, over which the moonbeams were sinking slowly to the floor. The sound of the first cock-crow came from the farm on the hillside. Another day had begun. Was she glad? No, nor sorry. The days might come and go, the years might come and go, but they might no more bring any gladness to a human heart that nothing could make glad. The sun would shine again: what would the sunshine be like now? Would it have joy in it? Would it have sadness? . . . The waning descending moon was better, the sighing wind from the sea was better, the restful darkness that came into the little room was better. . . . By-and-by there came quiet, but it was quiet that had no peace in it, no true easefulness; and there was silence, but the silence was broken by murmured words. 'Him or death, death or him,' the girl said wearily, speaking in the sleep that is death's twin sister. Then she moved a little, and her lips parted yet again, saying sadly, 'Death or him!'

Carlyle that there is "folly in that impossible precept, *Know thyself*, till it be translated into that partially possible one, *Know what thou canst work at*!"

'And are you wishing to impress us with the idea that your life is an idle one?' asked Canon Gabriel, who had met Kirkoswald in the by-ways of life rather frequently during the past ten days.

'No, I am not idle; happily for myself, or unhappily, I am constitutionally incapable of actual do-nothingness. But that is not the thing I mean. The man I envy is the man whose whole soul is absorbed in the idea that he has a work to do here on this earth, and that he cannot die till he has done it. That man has something to live for. The ordinary cares and pains and disappointments of life hardly touch him except when they touch his life-work. And if fate beat him off from it for awhile, he comes back to it with his immense and vital energy bent upon it with force increased a thousandfold.'

'How many men have you found living so?' asked the Canon.

'How many? I cannot tell you. One does not always recognise them. They have no time to sound their trumpet in the market-place, and the market-place knows nothing of them as a rule.'

There was a brief pause. The pinewood fire crackled cheerily, the canary stirred in his cage and gave a little chirp. Genevieve sat by her father's chair, silent, pale; that great stillness was yet upon her face.

'Have you nothing to say to all this?' asked Canon Gabriel, coming a little nearer to where she sat, and looking into her face anxiously, wonderingly.

'No,' she said, 'I have nothing to say. Some women are intrusted with a message of their own to deliver—some few, not happy women for the most part, I should infer, except they be happy in the utterance given them. For the rest, we are contented, or ought to be, if we may but minister to one to whom a clear message has been given.'

Her father lifted his face slowly as she spoke: there was a new depth, a new solemnity in it.

'Are you thinking of me?' he asked. 'Are you speaking of me as of one to whom a clear message has been given? . . .

for depression, discouragement, unhopefulness of heart. The very struggling and tossing of the bare boughs against the sky gave you a sense of desolateness—of wild, imploring desolateness, that might not be comforted nor stayed till the wind, having done its worst, went down. It would surely go down, that rough north wind that came from the sea. Would the wilder wind of sorrow go down when its work was done?

What would be left when it had gone down?

A fallen tree, with its branches yet green?

A ship on its first voyage, stranded on a rock in mid-ocean?

A human heart wounded, to be healed no more till its beating had done?

The gray morning went on silently, sunlessly. 'I shall not go over to Thurkeld Abbas till the postman has been,' Bartholomew had said. The coming of the mild, pleasant little man who brought the letters was an agitation now, and the sight of an envelope in his hand a reason for painful nervous excitement.

He had only one letter this morning. It was for Genevieve, and it was from her friend and godmother, Mrs. Winterford, the lady who had sent the photographs from Venice. She was coming home, she said, and she wanted Genevieve to go to her for a few weeks if it were possible.

'At any rate, you will come to me for Christmas, dear,' Mrs. Winterford said. 'I know your father will spare you if he can. He will remember that I have never spent a Christmas alone at Havilands yet. I consider it my duty to be there, but I do not like to think of being there with no one to help to cheer me, to keep me up to my responsibilities. You will come, dear? I need not tempt you with a description of packages of *bric-à-brac* to be unpacked and delighted in. It is for my sake you will come. It is for your own sake that I want to have you.'

Genevieve gave the letter to her father silently, and he read it in silence.

'You must not refuse this, Genevieve dear,' he said unhesitatingly.

'I must go to Havilands, and leave you here alone?'

'No; I will go with you as far as London, and remain there till you are ready to come back; then we will come back together.'

darkness, the ecstasy of reason superseded becomes the foolishness of reason vitiated. If any impulse come to his creative power at all, it comes fitfully and in doubt. It may rule him strongly, and impel him to create things fair in the sight of men, but in his own heart there will be the knowledge that his highest insight is baffled and out-done.

‘I have the thought within me that a keener discipline of suffering in earlier life would have lifted me into higher regions of living and thinking, would have raised me above the desire for material comforts and surroundings, would have shown me that the only true beauty is spiritual beauty—such beauty as may so touch the chords of a man’s soul here in time that they shall vibrate on into eternity.

‘Had I been stricken, as others are stricken, with the intense consciousness that comes by experience of man’s inhumanity to man, then I had had a burden. I had cried aloud; my message had been a passionate demand for a wider and greater and grander humanity, a humanity that had not only drawn heart to heart, but had impelled each individual soul onward from human love to a closer and fuller understanding of that love which is divine.

‘The very elements of humanity have yet to be studied and acquired by the great majority of us who boast of the large outlines of our human culture.

‘Years ago I read a book, and one sentence in it made my heart leap within me. It was this :

“No man who loves his kind can in these days rest content with waiting as a servant upon human misery, when it is in so many cases possible to anticipate and avert it.”

‘Had I been in a sort of Rip Van Winkle sleep, and awakened upon a later era than my own? Were there things going on all round me, outside my recognition, of which I was unaware? Was it true that there was a new human alertness abroad, a new and more perfect charity, a new and diviner enthusiasm of compassion? Was it true that the old Juggernaut wheels of selfish indifference had ceased to roll on over the hungry, the naked, the sick of heart and soul?

‘For days, nay weeks, I lived in a wondering hopefulness, trying to discern the signs of the altered times, lifting my face that I

not write to-day. We will talk over it in the evening, and the letter can be written to-morrow. Perhaps when you have seen Mr. Montacute you will know better when you would wish to go.'

'I should not wish to go till nearer Christmas,' Bartholomew said. 'This matter will be settled by that time, and the *Ænone* will be finished. It is because of my sorrowful and forsaken *Ænone* that I wish to go to London.'

The lone *Ænone*! Genevieve had half forgotten the sweet, complaining, disconsolate figure that was down there in the closed studio. Was it only four days since it had been closed? It was like four weeks or four months. There was a hush upon the place. The gloom that had fallen there was not uplifted.

Genevieve went in; then she stood for awhile, silently watching the wind-riven clouds, the bare tossing branches, but not thinking of them. She was thinking of nothing. The strange chill, the strange quiet in a place where there had been so much warmth, so much life, so much love; where glance had answered glance, flashing a life's devotion across the fireside; where words had been spoken that seemed to germinate on the moment; where silences had passed surcharged with meanings of more imperative power than any that eloquence had created; the hush, the emptiness coming after these was like the dropping of thick darkness that could be felt into the middle of a sunny summer's day. Life itself seemed arrested. The thing that had been an ecstasy was reduced to a drear repentance.

It was easy to understand the *Ænone* now. Genevieve stood before the canvas with a new appreciation, a new reverence. The sorrow of the white-robed maiden, who stood there amid the wandering ivy and the vine, was no more an overdrawn and incomprehensible sorrow.

'I know now,' Genevieve said, speaking half audibly, as people do speak in the extremes of life; 'I know now what moved you to cry to those far Ionian hills, to cry aloud—

"O happy Heaven, how canst thou see my face?
O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight?
O death, death, death, thou ever floating cloud,
There are enough unhappy on this earth!
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live:
I pray thee pass before my light of life,
And shadow all my soul, that I may die."

'The poor ! Could it be that there were any poor left in the land ?

'Then I turned in my watching, and I saw the homes where live the hunger-stricken who hide their hunger and their half-nakedness in silence and in shame. There I found the widow with her white face marred with weeping, worn with alternations of hoping and despairing, with her fatherless children born but to cry for bread, and to die needing it. There I found sickness left unvisited, old age left unsolaced, sin left unwarned, patient long-suffering left unrecognised, strong pure hopes left to wither and die in despair, great efforts left to fail for the need of a helping hand, talent left in a painful and useless obscurity for the lack of ground whereon to stand, and genius itself left to hurl its natural scorn in the face of a hard and careless world steeped to the lips in its own refined sensualities. All this I saw, and again as I turned that piercing voice came thrilling passionately in my ears :

"Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me."

'That was years ago. I turned from the sight, from the sound, but I did not turn from it the same man.

'Only to-day have I realized the meaning of all I saw, of all I heard ; only to-day, when hard Experience has touched me with her icy finger.

'Now, if any art of mine might ever speak again, its message would be clear—at the least it would be clear. And till the day of my death it would have but one burden, and that burden would be an appeal to man for man his brother, a plea that Christian charity might have reconsideration, a cry that the vast aggregate resources of a mighty nation might be brought to bear upon that nation's still existing wants and wrongs and miseries and pains.'

* * * * *

The low grave voice stopped. It was as if one near death had made a confession that he had been greatly wanting to make. Genevieve had never heard her father speak of himself, of his own inner life, of his convictions or want of convictions, as he had spoken now. Even so far as the principles of his art went, he had been wont to use a reserve that was almost silence ; and she knew that his best work had been the result of processes of thought

said to himself as he went, feeling that it was a somewhat curious effect for so tumultuous a trouble to have wrought. Altogether, things were strange—strange but not unpleasant, not unsatisfactory in a certain sense. 'If the day were fine, I should be fancying myself young again,' he went on. The strain of living seemed relaxed within him. He was conscious again of that feeling to which he could give no name. Was it content, a gray, placid content? Whatever it was, it was not pain, nor dread. 'Perhaps it is a kind of foretaste of the mood that old age will bring,' he continued. 'It is only fair that age should bring back some of the satisfactions of youth; and there is no greater satisfaction than a permanent tranquillity.'

It was in this mood that he entered the house beyond the church where Mr. Montacute lived and had his office, if such it might be termed. With a somewhat rare abnegation the grim oppressiveness of an ordinary lawyer's office had been softened away. There was an inner room beyond a round-topped arch, and whether or no the usual tin boxes and red-tape tied parcels might lie beyond the heavy curtains that fell to the floor, no uninitiated man or woman might guess; but no such evidences of a large and aristocratic practice obtruded themselves upon his clients' sight. The outer room might have been described as a library. There were bookcases in it, and an old-fashioned comfortable sofa or two between the writing-tables. The windows were curtained, the floors were carpeted, the walls were not destitute of pictures. You sat down with a sigh of relief from any nervous tremors that might have taken possession of your soul as you went up the somewhat gloomy stair.

Mr. Montacute was an old man, probably nearer seventy than sixty now. He was tall, slim, erect, white-haired, not unimposing. An accident had deprived him of the sight of one of his eyes, and he was learned enough to tell you—

'In what Greek or Latin name
The visual nerve was withered to the root,'

though but little perceptible change had come upon 'the unspotted crystal.' It was the right eye. You noticed the difference, a want of expression; and Mr. Montacute was careful always to seat himself so that the expressionless eye was nearest

‘ Shall I come down again, Miss Bartholomew ?’

And the answer came simply, yieldingly :

‘ Yes, come to Netherbank again before you go away.’

CHAPTER LIX.

‘ WHAT I DID NOT WELL, I MEANT WELL.’

‘ Who summoned these cold faces that begun
To press on me and judge me? Though I stooped
Shrinking, as from the soldiery a nun,
They drew me forth, and spite of me . . . enough !
These buy and sell our pictures, take and give,
Count them for garniture and household-stuff.
And where they live needs must our pictures live
And see their faces, listen to their prate,
Partakers of their daily pettiness,
Discussed of, “ This I love, or this I hate,
This likes me more, and this affects me less !”
Wherefore I choose my portion.’

ROBERT BROWNING : *Fictor Ignotus.*

No one could have written the letter that Mr. Montacute wrote to Bartholomew, except Mr. Montacute himself. As a piece of testimony to the truth that the style is of the man it was complete.

It was not a discourteous letter; even under provocation Mr. Montacute was rarely known to descend to anything that could be termed discourtesy. He never forgot that he was a gentleman; his clients seldom forgot that he was also a lawyer.

‘ I have seen Mr. Richmond,’ he wrote, ‘ and I have also seen Miss Richmond; and having heard their version of the affair, I can only repeat more emphatically than before that the circumstances are difficult and embarrassing. There is no disposition on their part towards anything that could be spoken of as injustice. They are prepared to do all that they can reasonably be expected to do.

‘ Having given considerable thought to the matter, and hoping that if it can be arranged without further proceedings it may be more agreeable to you, I have suggested that the affair should be settled by arbitration. Mr. Richmond has consented to abide by

'You perceive, doubtless, that it is an affair that may be looked at from two points of view?' Mr. Montacute began again in his serene, formal way.

'I should say that it might be looked at from twenty points of view,' Bartholomew said, speaking the impatient words without impatience of manner. 'Everyone who looks at it at all will do so from the little corner where he stands. I wanted to know how it seemed to you; and I think I perceive how it seems.'

It was seeming different to the artist himself now. The colour and turn of the lawyer's mind struck upon his own receptiveness darkly. He had been a fool; and his rectitude not above suspicion: that was how the matter stood now in this absence of sympathetic insight, in this presence of legal impassibility.

'It would be easy for me to say how I look upon the affair,' Mr. Montacute replied, speaking with more consciousness of a wide and exact vocabulary than desire to conciliate a client. 'If, as it seems, you want my advice, I can give it briefly. Let conciliatory measures be tried. If you like, I will write to Mr. Richmond, proposing an interview between him and myself.'

'I should wish to leave the thing entirely in your hands, if you will have it so left.'

'Then certainly you may leave it, and I will do the best I can,' said Mr. Montacute with a sudden graciousness of manner, and assuredly he could be gracious when he chose. 'I will see Mr. Richmond, and you may expect to hear from me in a few days,' he added, turning his expressive eye upon the artist as he rose to go, with a greater amicableness in it than before. Yet there was no assurance for Bartholomew to take away with him, no sense of any vital human helpfulness, of any desire to avert or assuage suffering. A coldly negative conduct of the matter to some end that should seem fitting in Mr. Montacute's sight was all that he need expect.

Noel Bartholomew went home as he had come, quietly, composedly; but the lightness, the hopefulness, had gone from his quiet. Had he hoped more than he knew, that he should thus be so near to disappointment?

It was only some two hours past noon, but over in the west there was already a look of evening. The wind drove the clouds

is requested to do his judging. Think of the fate of Keats's *Endymion* for years after the *Edinburgh Review* had poured out its "shallow ribaldries" upon the man; bidding him go back to his gallipots, since a starved apothecary was better than a starved poet—not that I would presume to name my own name in the same breath with the name of Keats; but let your work stand on what level it may, the same rule holds good, the rule that one voice that blames has the strength of ten that praise—of ten? ay, of ten thousand!

'But what of ten thousand, if there were so many in Murk-Marishes, what of them all to you?'

'I cannot explain all that it is to me,' said the artist, feeling very sore at heart under this new humiliation. But it was a humiliation that had to be drained to the dregs. He had to write his letter to Mr. Montacute—a stupid, blundering, self-betraying letter he made it. And finally he had to consent that the pictures should be taken to Mr. Montacute's office to be weighed in the balances there by an artist who was to come from York for the purpose. Surely here at length was the last ingenuity of a pitiless fate.

When the pictures had gone, Bartholomew went into his studio again, and set his palette, and drew his *Ænone* forward to the light. Genevieve wondered a little at the still resoluteness visible on his gray face. It was not his use and wont to begin working in a mood like this.

'Shall you make the alterations you once thought of making, father?'

'No, dear. I am only anxious now to get it done—this and the two others.'

'You will not take them with you to London?'

'No, I shall make arrangements for their being sent up afterward. . . . If it should be necessary for you to remember, I intend to send them to Messrs. Meyer and Calanson's, in New Bond Street.'

There was a pause—it was only momentary, not long enough for the recognition of any feeling of chillness or dread.

'As if you were likely to forget!' Genevieve said lightly, yet watching closely.

'Despert poor stuff,' he remarked, with cool surprise. 'I isn't goin' to stop,' he went on, turning to Bartholomew. 'Ah nobbut com' in to ask a bit o' favour o' ya. Ah want a pictur' painted to hing up, ya know; to hing i' t' parlour, if ya think ya could make a bit o' tahme to deä ma one. . . . What saäy ya?'

'I shall be very glad,' said Bartholomew, restraining his smiles, feeling in the heart of him that this new commission was an expression of sympathy under the mischances wrought by the old; and, perhaps, also a delicate way of offering practical help in a moment that he knew only too well was understood everywhere to be a somewhat critical moment for himself and his daughter. 'I should be glad to paint a picture for you,' Noel Bartholomew said, speaking quite truthfully. 'What sort of pictures do you care for most? Have you anything in your mind's eye that you could describe to me?'

'Ay, Ah can see 't as well as if 'twas deän. Ah want ya to paint me an' t' beäst—t' Kessenmas beäst 'at Ah's fattenin'. An' a beauty he is, as fine as owt i' t' three Ridin's. Ah just want ya to take him as he stands, an' me wi' my hand upon him; an' when ya've painted him ya sall hev as fine a cut ov his sirloin for yer Kessenmas dinner as iver ya sat doon teä. An' as for t' price o' t' thing, it's neither here nor there. . . . Noo: what saäy ya?'

It must certainly be admitted that poor Bartholomew was a little at a loss to know what to say.

'I am very sorry,' he began, 'but do you know that I have never painted an animal in my life, not even in my landscape pictures? Animal-painting is, as it were, a separate branch of art, and requires a special training.'

'You deänt saäy so?' said Mr. Crudas, evidently much disappointed. 'Noo, Ah thowt you were up te onything. Ah *sud* ha' liked yon beäst to hing up i' t' parlour.'

'Have it photographed,' suggested Bartholomew.

'Naäy: Ah care nought aboot them things. Ah like a bit o' culler. But what isn't to be, isn't, seä they saäy.'

'You wouldn't care for a portrait of yourself without the animal?'

'Yis, Ah *sud*,' replied Mr. Crudas, brightening in a rather wonderful way. 'Yis, Ah *sud* like to ha' mysel' painted vary weel. There's woss-like folks aboot, Ah reckon. An' there's

'You will be taking the opportunity to go for a walk, dear,' her father said, setting another palette, and choosing fresh brushes.

Mr. Crudas was looking on with the amused interest of the uninitiated.

'Ay, what she nobbut leuks dowly,*' said Ishmael. Then apparently remembering something, he turned to her questioningly. 'You'll be a bit doon aboot Mr. Kirkoswald mebbe. Ha' ya heerd owt hoo he is te-daäy?'

'Is Mr. Kirkoswald ill?' Bartholomew asked, glancing toward his daughter, and making an instant effort to spare her.

'You deänt knaw?' said Mr. Crudas in amazement. 'Why, you're buried i' this spot! You hear nowt. It's fowr daäys sen I heerd tell 'at Mr. Kirkoswald had getten t' fever. There's them as says he's reeght sarved; he sud ha' kept oot o' sike spots.'

'He has been in some house where there was fever?'

'Ay! all t' last week he was in an' oot among them Scaifes and Nunnelys; an' they hev it as bad as they can hev it. Young Joe Scaife's dead. He deed o' Saturday.'

'They live in Thurkeld Abbas?'

'Ay, doon at t' bottom end yonder.'

Bartholomew went up the orchard with his daughter, holding her hand within his arm silently; he could feel her tremulousness, he could understand her sudden weakness.

'Will you not go and lie down, dear, instead of going for a walk?'

'No, my father. I would rather be out of doors.'

'You will not go through Thurkeld Abbas?'

'Not if you do not wish it.'

'Go up and see Dorothy Craven, little one. She will know. And as soon as Mr. Crudas has gone I will go up to Usselby at once, and make inquiries. I do not feel unhopeful. He is so strong, and he has lived his life so temperately.'

'Do you remember the last evening he was here?'

'I remember only too well now. It struck me then that I had never heard him complain of physical weariness before.'

Bartholomew was obliged to go back to his sitter, and presently Genevieve went up to her own room. This was the third sudden shock that had come upon her in a little more than three weeks.

* Dowly = delicate.

CHAPTER LVII.

'I KNOW THE TRACES OF THE ANCIENT FLAME.'

'I said we were to part, but she said nothing.
There was no discord, it was music ceased.'
P. J. BAILEY: *Festus*.

THAT infinite need of the soul, which is love, is an elemental force which may awaken and develop under very varying conditions of intercourse.

The love of Dante for Beatrice will, to all time, stand as typical of the highest human love. It was a passionate love—passionate enough to yield rapture and ecstasy 'to the utmost limit of beatitude.' And it was faithful—faithful even unto death.

Yet, so far as may be discerned, 'Beatrice never so much as knew of the pure, lofty, ideal love she had inspired.'

Does it need always the imagination of a Dante to enable a man or woman to worship for a whole life long in silence, in patience, in a spiritual, immaterial consciousness of the finest and most far-reaching sympathy?

A whole life long! Ay, and beyond that. Though one may be gone by that grave which is the gate of Heaven, the one that is left may live on in a faithful, pure, exalted communion that it might have been less easy to establish permanently between two souls burdened and clouded by the intervention of material association.

Love that is truly love is spiritual affinity, puissant, dominating, serenely satisfying.

'So, though this alone were left to me, there need not be despair,' George Kirkoswald said to himself, walking upon the cliffs by the gray, illimitable sea. 'Though this alone—a lifelong unspoken devotion—were left, it would be better than the arid blankness that was before.

"'I feel it when I sorrow most,
'Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all."

There need not be despair,' he said, knowing within himself that

An hour later Bartholomew tapped at the door of his daughter's room. He had a note in his hand.

'It is from Mr. Severne, dear. The boy who brought it has gone; he did not wait for an answer.'

Genevieve glanced over it hurriedly.

'I had forgotten,' she said. 'The entertainment is this evening, and Mr. Severne begs me not to fail him; so many others have excused themselves.'

'But you cannot go, dear!'

'I think I can, father. It is nothing—no trouble, I mean. And it will be good to be doing something. . . . Are you going up to Usselby?'

'Yes. If you go to the village I will go round that way, and leave you at the schoolroom. Mr. Severne will see you safely home.'

'But you will not stay at Usselby?'

'No, dear, for your sake I will not; otherwise my place would have been by his bedside so long as anyone was needed there.'

The remainder of the evening passed as a dream passes. When Genevieve went into the shabby schoolroom at Murk-Marishes it was fast filling with eager people, who did not mind the smoky paraffin lamps, or the dusty brick floor. No attempt had been made to decorate the ink-stained walls. There were a few flowers about the extemporized platform. Mrs. Caton had lent her piano, which was a very good one; and Wilfred Stuart had come up with his violin. There would be no lack of music and song, no lack of listeners, no lack of anything but the one voice, the one glance, the one presence that gave charm and gladness to all the rest. 'How *can* I sing to-night?' Genevieve said to herself, going down to the farther end of the dim room to speak to Ailsie Drewe. Ailsie curtsied, and smiled the wan, unmeaning smile that was almost always on her face now.

'You'll be singing that song, miss, *The Land o' the Leal*?' she said. 'I asked Mr. Kirkoswald to tell you to sing it, an' he said he would; but mebbe he's forgot, bein' badly. But you'll sing it, miss, all the same? My little Davy was "good and fair," an' I like to think he's waitin'. I like to hear ya saäy so i' the song.'

'Then I will sing it if I can,' Genevieve said.

'Yes, I think so,' Genevieve answered, speaking without embarrassment or difficulty. She had on an old dress of pale gray-green cashmere, her little coral necklace was about her throat, her soft yellow hair shone in the flickering firelight. 'I think it will be well to attempt some kind of entertainment there,' she said. 'The room is small and shabby and depressing in the extreme, but there are old people and invalids in Murk-Marishes who cannot get down to Soulsgrif Bight. We should think of these a little.'

She spoke as if there were nothing else to be spoken of, or thought of; as if the village concert had been the uppermost thing in her mind, as if neither day nor night had brought any regret, any pain.

That serene philosophic look was still upon George's face, and Genevieve saw it there. His voice, too, was quiet, composed, dispassionate.

'Do you suppose that the people really care much for the entertainments?' he asked, speaking as men speak of things that are far from them at the moment.

'I believe they care more than we can ever know, or imagine, or believe,' Genevieve replied, with an energy that was perhaps above the occasion. 'A concert is something that they look forward to and look back upon in a way that is touching in the extreme. I never hoped to come so near to them as a verse of a song has brought me.'

There was a pause.

'May I ask which of your songs it is that they care for especially?' George asked, repressing all sign of interest, and betraying an involuntary hardness in his effort.

'It is *The Land o' the Leal*,' Genevieve replied. Her voice faltered a little as she said the words. 'They understand that. . . .

"There's nae sorrow there, Jean,
There's neither cold nor care, Jean;
The day is aye fair
In the land o' the leal."

That covers their view of the hereafter, and it is sufficient for many of them. It seemed rather pitiable at first; now I am glad

decided if unconventional *encore*. 'Sing it ower again!' demanded an elderly farmer from the moor'edge. 'Ay, let's hev that ower again!' was the cry of support from the back benches. Accordingly, the songs had to be repeated, to the great gratification of the singers. To have obtained an *encore* at Murk-Marishes was an honour to be rightly understood by no one outside the Ridings.

For Genevieve the only restful and soothing part of the programme was the violin-playing of Wilfred Stuart. He had never played better, never with a more infinite pathos. Was he thinking of one who might even then be lying on the misty outer verge of life? It was as if the music came to him from afar; his face was the face of one who listened, listened through sounds of pain and sorrow for other sounds that were echoing beyond. Was he interpreting those other sounds? Were they messages of peace? Had someone spoken, saying:

'Write above thy cross this inscription: "*Be not afraid; only believe*"'?

'And I am trying not to be afraid,' Genevieve said to Mr. Severne as they went up by the starlit ways to Netherbank.

She had spoken unreservedly of her sorrow, as her nature was; and something of her own remorse she had confessed also. But nothing was clear to him; and he did not ask that anything should be made clear. He was walking by contented ways. To-night he was happy; this trust and confidence made him happier; and perhaps a certain purpose that was in him added to the feeling. He did not disclose his purpose till they reached the stile.

'You will come in for a little while?' Genevieve asked. 'I expect that my father will have come back from Usselby by this time.'

'Shall I come in? I wonder! Will it be wise?' Mr. Severne said musingly, as if he spoke to himself. 'I think I will not. I will say "good-bye" to you here.'

'Why say it so solemnly?'

'Was I saying it solemnly? Perhaps I feel solemn. I think I do, in a way.'

'But you are not unhappy?'

'No; I am not unhappy,' replied Sir Galahad with unusual

Keturah had brought in the lamp, and was bustling in and out with the teacups. Bartholomew and George were talking by the fire. Opportunity was gone. Life was overpowering, and strangely confusing.

CHAPTER LVIII.

'LATE, LATE, SO LATE!'

'The artist draws from all things their essence; he feels on his nerves, moved like an Æolian harp, the electric spark before it bursts in the air; and in his heart, open to all feelings, the shock of social sufferings before humanity itself quakes under them; and in his mind, disturbed by continuous creation, he feels thoughts yet unborn in the soul of the universe.'—SEÑOR CASTELAR.

'YES, I am thinking of taking a holiday,' Kirkoswald was saying. 'It must seem very absurd of you to hear me say so; but I am feeling tired, very tired. For some days past life has seemed almost burdensome because of the very weariness of living it. I suppose it is the dull December skies coming after the dull November fogs.'

'A clear frosty morning would change your plans then, I hope,' Bartholomew replied. Genevieve was pouring out tea; the Canon was by her side.

'Is this your father's cup?' George said, coming up to her and looking into the still white face with some compassion, some surprise.

'It would probably take something more than a frosty morning to make me change my plans,' he said, answering Bartholomew; 'but of course they are not unalterable. . . . Sometimes I wish that I had been a little less master of my own fate,' he added in a grave, wearied way.

'I have often found that feeling,' said the Canon. 'I have often found that the man who is free looks upon the man who is bound hand and foot with something like envy. . . . It is not incomprehensible. The man who is bound is usually bound to something that is to him a motive and a purpose in life.'

'And is therefore in possession of one of Heaven's best gifts—if, indeed, it be not the best gift of all,' said George. 'I agree with

freshet spray of myrtle that the plant in the window afforded. 'Will you take that? Will you tell Mr. Kirkoswald that I asked you to give it to him? . . . He will understand.'

Did Sir Galahad understand? He put the piece of myrtle carefully into the bag he was carrying. The lamplight from the window shone full on his upturned face, full into his wondering blue eyes.

'Good-night,' he said, holding out his hand, keeping Genevieve's hand in his for one moment. 'Good-night, and good-bye.'

'Good-bye for the present.'

'Yes; only for the present!' he said with a great, glad, spiritual light coming into his face. 'Thank you for saying that; it is *only for the present!*'

Genevieve stood a few moments in the calm, solitary starlight that was upon all the land. She heard his footsteps dying upon the upland. A soft sighing wind, gentle as a spirit's breath, stirred the ivy; it swept by like a whisper, saying, 'Only for the present.'

CHAPTER LX.

A VESPER BELL.

'I leave the plain, I climb the height;
No branching thicket shelter yields;
But blessed forms in whistling storms
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.
* * * * *

Then move the trees, the copses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
Oh! just and faithful knight of God!
Ride on! the prize is near.'

TENNYSON.

GENERAL sympathy is apt to be a very disproportionate and un-reasoning thing; but all the same we acknowledge it to be priceless when we need either its condolence or its congratulation. Whether a great joy be yours or a great sorrow, you shall find your heart expanding to a general and genial fellow-feeling if the felicity be yours to win the same.

Then let me speak the truth—it will do me good to speak it, since the knowledge of it is a burden. I have been asking, praying, that a message from God might be given for me to deliver to my fellow-men from the day I first began to desire to work to good purpose until this day. Now, after thirty years of work, I see that my prayer has not been answered.

'You, who understand me, will not think I am speaking egotistically if I say that I believe that the gift that men call "genius" has been mine. The man who possesses it can hardly be mistaken about his possession. If he speak of it in the world's ears, his words are counted vanity. It is no more vanity to him than if he said, "My hair is brown" or "My eyes are black." He knows that he is no more to be credited with his genius than with his dark eyes. Yet to be conscious of the one is inevitable knowledge; to be conscious of the other is gross egotism.

'I only admit my consciousness now that I may show you all my suffering, and that I may prove to you that I am not mistaken in my conclusions.

'God gives genius. Carlyle's definition that "genius is the clearer presence of God Most High in the soul of man" is the nearest and truest definition I have yet found.'

'And it is the truest you will find,' said Canon Gabriel, turning his pale, fragile face toward Bartholomew, with a flush of fervour coming upon it even as he spoke. 'There, it has always seemed to me that the secret of that inspiration that men call creative power must for ever lie. A man's soul is a temple, a temple with an altar, and above that altar broods the dove of the Spirit of God. There, in that inner Spirit-temple, a man may listen for the still, small voice whose lightest whisper may inspire, and in so listening alone can he come to know himself "a sounding instrument," struck and moved to sounding by Invisible Hands.'

'He may listen,' said Bartholomew, beginning to speak again in the same strangely solemn way, 'or he may refuse to listen. If he refuse to listen there he may not hear that voice elsewhere, but though he refuse to hear he will yet not be in silence. There are other spirits, other voices, other inspirations. They seem identical. But presently, in confusion and bewilderment of soul, the man finds himself possessed ; the light within him has become

repeated to her. 'If he die, his death will be at my door, and I cannot know it and live. There will be a curse upon my forehead; his voice will cry from the ground, and from the heaven above me there will come the cry, "What hast thou done?"'

What had she done?

Her mental attitude on that evening after her return from Yarrell was a surprise, a mystery to herself even yet. The development of a new phase of her own character had astonished her, and that that phase should have been one of scorn and hardness was surely sufficient for a pain. It seemed now as if nothing could ever wholly do away the recollections of that evening's bitterness. If the wound were healed ever so happily, would not the scars remain? Was a restored love, a restored friendship, ever quite the same as one that had needed no restoring?

These were no idle questions.

'Forgiveness may be spoken with the tongue,
Forgiveness may be written with the pen,'

and the forgiveness may be full and precious, even sweet—sweet in the memory for evermore. But behind there will lie that other memory, the memory of the thing that made forgiveness necessary. It is not in human power to erase the heart's records, and the wise man prays unceasingly that the records of no heart may be the darker for any word or deed of his.

It had, of course, been impossible for Genevieve to go to Havilands. She was sorry, and Mrs. Winterford was sorry; but it might not be. There were other reasons besides the illness of George Kirkoswald. No letter had come from Mr. Montacute. Bartholomew had heard incidentally that Mr. Witherby, the artist who was to come from York, had not been able to come at the appointed time; but he had promised to give his opinion soon after Christmas. It was Christmas now. Christmas Day was over, gone by in a gloom and suspense that cast its shadow over the neighbourhood. But Bartholomew was not feeling impatient for Mr. Witherby's decision. He was trying not to think of the matter at all. It could only be pain, excessive pain, excessive humiliation; but something might be taken from his pain, or something might be added to it, and it was in the nature of the

might catch some refreshing from the breath that had come from the four winds of heaven to breathe upon slain sympathies that they might live.

'But, need I say it? I watched to my own despair. I watched—need I tell you what I saw in my watching? Need I show you the followers of the Man of Sorrows; need I ask you to look at the disciples of Him who was scourged, crowned with thorns, and nailed to a bitter cross?

'I watched and I saw in my watching streets of palaces in the towns, and over the country stately palaces in stateliest isolation everywhere. And I knew the life of the people who lived in these. And as I watched in my awakened eagerness there came a voice across the centuries speaking sadly, wearily:

"The Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head!"

'In the streets, in the shops of jewellers and dealers in luxury of all kinds, places that were crowded with rank and fashion, and beauty and indifference, and strength and selfishness, I heard above all other sounds that same voice speaking—speaking solemnly, commandingly:

"Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and come and follow Me."

'Crowding after these—the richest, the highest of the land—I saw the millions who follow on behind them as closely as they may, struggling each one to get nearer and yet nearer to some ever-advancing standard of living. Success led but to desire for success. There was no time, no thought left for other desires. Their life of hurry, of restlessness, seemed but as one long fever. Fever is pain, pain is sacrifice, but to whom do men offer this sacrifice of the best they have to give? To Him who spent whole long nights on the solitary mountain-top alone with His Father?—or to the Moloch of modern luxury, whose reward is a vengeance unknown to blinded eyes, undreamt of by hearts hardened by softness of living.

'And again as I watched there came that voice above the world's wild din:

"When thou makest a feast, call the poor, for they cannot recompense thee: thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection."

you to torture, you would be conscious of yearning toward it, yearning to save the man from himself, from the aftermath of his own traitorous deed. Having once seen Bartholomew's Judas, you never forgot that the man who betrayed his Master had immediately found his remorse to be greater than he could bear. . . . Not every traitor has the grace to go out and hang himself.

There were a few touches to be put to the Sir Galahad. This was only a head on a canvas some thirty inches square. It was hardly more than a portrait; but it was, of course, an idealized portrait. The painter had made it touchingly pathetic; and the spirituality of the picture was as the spirituality of the poem, a thing to move a man against his coldest and earthiest will.

Bartholomew was sitting before it, looking into it, passing the points of his brushes between his fingers listlessly.

'Shall you finish it to-day, father?' Genevieve asked.

'I don't know, dear. . . . I don't feel like touching it.'

It was the last day of the old year, and it had a sadness not all its own for the artist and his daughter. Dr. Armitage had promised to come round by Netherbank on his return from his first visit to Usselby; he had not come yet, and the suspense was growing as the moments went on. The doctor had thought it quite probable that he might have something decisive to say; but he had given no opinion as to the nature of that decisiveness. He had tried to make his manner as neutral as his words; but he had not succeeded in this. We always know more than we discern: and it seemed to Genevieve that she already heard him pronouncing that last fatal sentence that he would pronounce so clearly, so straightforwardly, and yet with such undertones of sympathy. . . . These undertones had been there all through for her.

Once, meeting Dr. Armitage in the lane whilst her eyes were still wet with the fruitless tears, she had urged in wild abandonment:

'Make him well again, Dr. Armitage. Save him, for my sake, save him!'

And she would never forget the tones in which the answer came:

'*I wish I could!* I wish I could promise you. But believe that I will do my best.'

well-nigh unconscious, and therefore inexplicable in words. She had thought of him as one without the analytic gift. He had lived by instinct, as it were, and now it seemed that his work had been done by instinct too. He had disclaimed the higher inspiration. Instinct might be pure and true, but it was not inspiration. His past career was not satisfactory now that he had come to look back upon it. Where exactly was he standing at present? And now that light had come, where might he not stand in the future? She was conscious of a new reverence—reverence for the man to be, even while she looked somewhat anxiously upon the man he was.

Mr. Severne came presently, bringing a quite new element into the thought-stilled atmosphere. His boyish blushes and excuses were not unwelcome—they were never unwelcome at Netherbank.

'I had to go down into Soulsgrif, you know,' he said, 'and my watch is wrong. It was thirteen minutes before the clock in the hall this morning, and the hall-clock was seven minutes behind the church; and now look at it—it's just a quarter to twelve! . . . What time is it really? Half-past six! Oh, I say!'

Mr. Severne drank a cup of cold tea, and ruined the wires of Prince Camaralzaman's cage by trying to get a big piece of sugar in between; then he and the Canon went away. The dog-cart was standing near the stile, the stars were coming out, the wind had gone down.

'Are you going too?' Bartholomew asked of George, who seemed as if he were preparing to take his departure.

'Yes,' he said, 'I think I've got a headache; but I don't know, it's so long since I had one.'

He was looking at Genevieve as he spoke. The great stillness on her face had moved him, and she knew that he was moved. His face faltered, the pitiless look had gone from his eyes.

'When do you leave Usselby?' asked the artist. 'Have you any fixed time?'

'No, it is not fixed exactly. I thought of going some time this week.'

'Come down again before you leave us.'

There was a little silence: two glances met for a moment, one half sad, wholly wearied; the other pleading and still.

admit of his having the satisfaction of his daughter's company. He had promised that he would go back again as quickly as possible.

'I have only come up to wish Mr. Kirkoswald a happy New Year,' he said to Jael. 'And, of course, my good wishes include Mr. Severne. . . . You will tell them both?'

'Ay, Ah'll tell 'em noo,' said Jael, more gratified than she was able to show. 'Ah'll tell 'em noo. Mebbe he'll send ya a word or two back. He's as peärt* as owt.'

'He,' of course, was always her master; but her master was asleep just now; and the message that came was written on a slip of paper by the patient watcher who was still at George Kirkoswald's bedside.

'Thank you very much,' Sir Galahad said, 'and I know I may send Mr. Kirkoswald's thanks as well as mine; and his best wishes for the New Year. I seem to feel sure that it will be a happy year for all of us. I never felt sure in this way before. . . . Please tell Miss Bartholomew, with my kind regards, that Mr. Kirkoswald is doing as well as possible—Dr. Armitage says so. I am wondering if I shall get down to church for the Epiphany. I should so much like to offer the Thanksgiving myself, and to offer it on that day.'

So Ernest Severne wrote, not dreaming that when the day of light came he would be at the Rectory, lying there in the stillness and darkness of his own room, stricken with fever, sorely stricken; yet—so far—as fully conscious as he was wholly undismayed.

The stroke had seemed to fall suddenly. No one had noticed any change in him, not even George Kirkoswald, whose deep gratitude was growing with every hour of his convalescence. More than gratitude was growing. That indefinite charm of mingled boyishness and goodness, of simplicity and self-abnegation, which had won the young curate friends everywhere, had won for him all the affectionate regard that was needful for the foundation of a strong and lasting friendship between himself and Kirkoswald. It was a friendship that was in its earliest stage as yet.

'I only know that there is something I want to strengthen, something I dread to lose,' George said two or three days after the

* Peärt = alert, lively.

the decision of any competent person. It remains for you to consent, or to refuse to consent, to this proposition.'

'Then assuredly I refuse,' said Bartholomew, speaking with ashy lips, as he put the letter down. 'Arbitration! Where will they find an artist who will agree to put a sunset sky into a scale, and determine its value in money by the uncertain and dubitable test of his own opinion, his own ability? What man who had ever painted a picture himself would dream of attempting to put a market-price upon the painting of a group of Madonna lilies, if he knew that the man who had painted them had put his own price there. . . . No—assuredly no! Let them do their worst. Again and again I say "no" to that mode of chaffering over any work of mine!'

So he spoke in the first moment of surprise, and bitterness and agitation—an agitation which was even greater than it seemed to be, and more exhausting. He had not expected that the man whom he had asked in all good faith to help him in his strait would have contrived to make him feel that he, and he alone, had been to blame. Instead of helpfulness additional pain had come. Yet even now he could be thankful that he had not to bear his pain without companionship. His daughter sat beside him silently—silently soothing him, silently sympathizing. Not till the first burst of indignation was over did she venture any word of her own. That word was surprising when it did come.

'Give your consent, my father,' she said, stroking the thin nervous hand. 'Give it at once, and unconditionally.'

Bartholomew looked into her face with astonishment.

'Can you quite understand the meaning of your advice?' he asked.

'I think I can. If you refuse, it will be said that you are afraid that your work will not stand the test.'

'No artistic work that ever was done would stand the chilling test of deliberate and intentional disparagement. Conscientious as those pictures are, there is an atmosphere about them already through which I cannot penetrate myself—an atmosphere of gloom, of heaviness. The charm of a picture, as of a poem, is too delicate a thing to bear the cold, shallow glance of a man prejudiced beforehand by the very circumstances under which he

Unfortunately, his mother, who was a widow, had gone abroad, and had taken her two daughters with her. They had been at Nice, at Montpellier; then Mrs. Severne had written a hasty note, saying that, having met some friends, they were going over the Pyrenees into Spain. She would write again, she had said; but no other letter had come yet. So it was that just at that moment Mr. Severne was hardly sure of their exact whereabouts. Letters were written, telegrams sent, but no answer came.

There was no lack of nurses; half a dozen women out of the little townlet volunteered to come, and two were chosen; but the Canon seldom left the bedside except when duty called him away. The old man sat there, or knelt there, by day and by night. If prayer might avail prayer should not be wanting; but every plea was ended as the Master ended His:

‘Not my will, but Thine.’

Delirium set in fitfully at first; consciousness came flickeringly between: one merged into the other in strange and unaccountable ways.

‘Do you know me, Ernest?’ the Canon said to him on the evening of the day he had desired to keep as a day of thanksgiving for the recovery of another. A little while before he had not known the face that was bent over him so anxiously; but now a calmer mood had come, and the Canon was fain to speak a little while he might. ‘Do you know me, my son?’ he asked, with pale, patient lips, and eyes dim with watching. And the younger man smiled, putting out his hand.

‘We shall always know each other,’ he said. ‘And I think I shall find and know your other son—we shall wait for you together.’

‘You will not have long to wait,’ the old man rejoined with the calmness of one who trusts death for all that life has denied.

‘No; I think it will not be long. . . . When I say “good-bye” to you I shall say it as *she* said it, *only for this present*. You will see her. . . . You will tell her I did not forget?’

‘Genevieve?—Yes; I will tell her,’ the Canon said, still holding the hot hands in his own cool palm. ‘She was here to-day with her father—I would not let them come in; but I saw them for a moment, and I had to turn the child away from the door with her eyes full of tears.’

'I am very likely to forget,' was the emphatic reply.

It was a bright sunny winter's day, and Bartholomew worked on persistently. Genevieve sat by him, sometimes talking, sometimes reading to him, sometimes silently working. 'It is like old times,' she said once, standing beside her father, who was touching the white lights on the robe of the Greek maiden.

'Yes,' he said, 'it is a little. It would be still more like old times if Mr. Kirkoswald were to come in.'

'He will come before he goes away,' Genevieve replied, feeling glad that her father could not see the hot crimson tide that flooded her face and throat. But he heard the tremulousness in her voice, and changed the question that had been on his lips.

'I should think he would be at the entertainment to-morrow evening?'

'He said that he should not.'

'But he intended going away at once when he said that.'

'Perhaps he may have gone, after all,' Genevieve replied, a sinking of heart being noticeable in her tone.

'No, I don't think he has gone; and I should not be surprised if he changed his intention. He did not seem in the most decided of minds about going.'

'It may be so; but I have an impression that he will not be at the concert.'

The impression deepened when the morning came; and hope strove with it unprevailingly. The day was bright and calm, as most of the days of that week had been; and Bartholomew sat before his easel from the first moment of sufficient light, changing his work as weariness of eye and hand came on, and feeling considerably relieved when Mr. Crudas came in for an hour after dinner to sit for his portrait. Mr. Crudas had had the good sense to come in his rough gray-cloth coat. The only change he had made was the discarding of his gingham neckerchief for a blue silk one with 'bird's-eye' spots. The strong characteristics of his head and face, the abundant silver-gray hair, the fresh, hale complexion, the deep, keen, searching eye, were not uninspiring to a man whose feeling for the lines of human character was at least as well developed as his eye for human beauty.

Genevieve was in the studio when Ishmael Crudas came.

It was midnight when the Bridegroom came.

He came with seeming suddenness. There was no one there but Canon Gabriel. The old man knelt, holding the still hands in his, praying, listening, watching.

'There is the bell for evening service,' the dying lips said quietly. . . . 'I must go now. . . . I am glad I have a clean surplice. I will arise and go. . . .'

CHAPTER LXI.

SAPPHIRES AND AGATES.

'That low man seeks a little thing to do,
Sees it and does it :
This high man, with a great thing to pursue,
Dies ere he knows it.

* * * * *

That, has the world here—should he need the next
Let the world mind him !
This, throws himself on God, and unperplexed,
Seeking shall find Him.'

ROBERT BROWNING.

THOUGH it was winter-time it seemed as if all nature lent itself to the peace, the calm, the beauty that gathered about the new-made grave in the churchyard by the Rectory.

On the very day when it was made the widowed mother came and stood there with new tears on her face, and hopes in her heart newly dead. Her daughters were near her to comfort her ; and she knew that other sons in other lands sorrowed with her, and for her. Yet, though these were left, her tears went on flowing for the one who was taken, the one who was the youngest of them all, and whose life had seemed fullest of fair and high promise.

There was comfort in Canon Gabriel's presence, comfort and healing and peace. 'I cannot feel as if he were dead,' the old man said in his gentle sympathetic way, walking up and down with Mrs. Severne over the green turf at the bottom of the churchyard. There was a little stream running by ; a bold, bright-eyed robin was chirping on the briar-sprays that swept the water ; a blackbird

For a time it seemed as if her strongest feeling was the feeling of remorse that came over her. She knew only too well that a man despondent, downcast, with the strings of life hanging 'soundless and slack,' is a tenfold casier prey to any disease, to any chill, than the man in whose veins life flows with the vigour that comes of the spirit's fervour of life.

Then, too, he had been reckless, this she could not doubt, translating some words of Canon Gabriel's by the light of Ishmael Crudas's words. He had not cared about the risk he had run since there was no one else to care. . . . Now perhaps he might never know that her caring had been passionate beyond the bounds of pain. If one told him, he might not hear ; if he heard, it might be as if he heard not.

The knowledge that she could now do nothing was insupportable. Only last evening she had said to herself that when he came down she would undo all that she had done on that fatal evening. She would tell him that she had understood, that she had forgiven, that she even had sympathy for him because of all that he had suffered. . . . Now she sat there knowing that he would not come down. She might wait, but in vain ; she might listen, but in vain. She might pray ; would that be in vain also ?

Prayer is never made in vain, and no man lives the life of prayer uncertain of its certainty. Not this answer to this prayer, nor that answer to that, shall convince you ; but the slow result of time and trial.

Prayer is sacrifice, and though that answer that you look for may never come, no sacrifice is offered vainly. Not all the incense-smoke goes upward. It descends upon the man who carries the burning censer of prayer, it enwraps him, the cloud rises between him and the rude wild world, and the influence comes upon him for soothing and for calm.

There is a thrilling ecstasy of prayer in mercy granted : it comes swiftly, it stays fitfully. There is a hallowed calm of prayer denied ; it comes slowly, it comes after long wrestling, after sore strife, but it departs not at all. 'He hath done all things well.' So we see ; so we learn to rest ; assured that what He does must be always well.

* * * *

It was some days before the Canon was able to go over to Netherbank. The bright calm weather lingered on, a daisy or two studded the hedgerows, the catkins on the alder-trees turned to purple in the sun, the pale heads of last year's grasses were bowed gracefully, the red oak-leaves rustled and whispered together. Were they whispering sympathy? There was a smile on the face of the old man when he went into the studio down the orchard. And there was change in his voice too. Who does not know that strange touching intonation that comes into voices that have been silenced by bereavement? The unspoken words vibrate through the spoken ones; other meanings flash across the commonplace thing that is uttered.

'Dr. Armitage gave me permission to come; he thought that it would be better than your coming to me,' the old man said, taking the chair that Genevieve placed for him by the fire. Here was all the old sweet life again, with all its old daintiness, its old homeliness. Sorrows had come and gone, and changes and chances had happened, but the changes had changed nothing. Genevieve's soft subdued smile, the pretty pink flush of pleasure that had come with the Canon's coming, and her great crown of shining golden hair, seemed to take all the idea of mournfulness from her black dress. 'There are so many things I want to know,' the Canon went on, 'so many things I want to say, that I could not keep away any longer than I was compelled. And, first of all, I want to know about Mr. Kirkoswald. The doctor's *bulletins* perplex me.'

'You know that the worst is over?' Bartholomew said.

'Yes, I know so much as that; but I also gather that his recovery is slow and disappointing.'

'Do you wonder that it should be so?' the artist asked. 'Do you think it has been no shock to him, this terrible sequence to his own illness? I have not seen him, but I can well understand that his trouble is very great.'

'You think it is that, then, that hinders his convalescence?'

'I fear so.'

'Then I shall ask Dr. Armitage if I may not go to Usselby to-morrow. I have messages that can hardly fail to be messages of peace,' said the Canon, with the gentle smile coming over his

Two or three women were standing near, listening, waiting for a word. The girl looked at them with wearied, wistful eyes.

‘I am glad to sing anything, to say anything, if I may but help you to bear your troubles a little,’ she said, speaking in a voice that was hardly more than a low, clear whisper. ‘Troubles are very bad to bear sometimes, are they not? They come so quickly and so thickly, one has hardly time to get over one stroke before the next falls, and it is so difficult for us to see any lovingness in it all at the time. *We cannot see it then*; it is impossible. We can only wait, and try to hope, and even trying to hope is not easy. . . . Nothing is easy that is good. You will think that I am not comforting you if I tell you that life that is all pain, all suffering, all labour, all humiliation, all misunderstanding, is the best life of all. But it is so. I am learning to perceive that it is so, that it must be so, since it was the life that Christ chose to live. You know He might have been rich, and powerful, and have had the highest rank, and all the ease and luxury and importance that belong to rank and wealth. But He would have none of these things. He chose to live with poor people, fishermen, and such like; to live as they live, suffer as they suffer, because He knew that even He could not be quite humanly perfect if He did not suffer human sufferings. That is why we have to try to follow in His footsteps, to tread with bleeding feet over the same rough pathways, because He would have us perfect too. It may be that only He can see the crown of thorns that He has placed upon the brow of each one of us here; but He does see, and He knows the sharp pressure of it. . . . He will take it away by-and-by. If we only endure to the end, He Himself will take it away. If we come to stand before the great white throne, having come there through great tribulation, He will give us other crowns for these of wounding thorn.’

A few minutes later Mr. Severne came in with Mrs. Caton and a group of ladies who had met at her house, and the concert began. It was a very pleasant and successful concert, the people thought, who were taking part in it. The listeners were always pleased, always grateful. It would have been hard to say whether *The Death of Nelson* or *The Brave Old ‘Téméraire’* was the more popular. The audience had risen on each occasion to a

mind the contemplation of such beatitude as that set before us in the Apocalypse is not—let me confess it—made without a certain shrinking, a certain awe, a certain sense of the overwhelmingness of that perpetual spiritual altitude to be maintained beyond the gates of pearl. There are men and women, and these not the worst, who are daunted rather than drawn, dismayed rather than encouraged; and it seems to me that so long as humanity is human that absolute transformation will be yearned for only by the few.’

‘Only by the few,’ said Canon Gabriel with a sudden light and comprehension. ‘Many are called, but only the few enter into that inner court of the Kingdom of Heaven where they rest not day nor night from adoration.’

‘And you think there may be outer courts?’

‘I am assured that there are many, many mansions; and I am assured that one star differeth from another star in glory. . . . I fear there has been, as you say, a good deal of mistaken conception as regards the future life; doubtless it yet exists, and though all controversy on the subject must end pretty nearly where it began, something certainly might be done to put new life into ideas so overlaid by the old conventional phrases as to have lost all semblance of vigour and truth.’

‘I have suffered from those phrases all my life,’ said Bartholomew; ‘my soul’s health has suffered, and I believe that millions of people, if they would confess the truth, would admit the same. It is even so with many texts of the Scripture itself. They have been repeated so often, and in such mindless, reckless ways, that they have come to have no meaning in them.’

‘Yes,’ said the Canon. ‘I have often wondered what exactly is the nature of the comfort derived by many people from the magnificent declaration—

“We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him.”

Which of us has the joy in that that he might have? Which of us remembers that to be—humanly speaking—as we believe Christ to be now, will be to have not only a spirit, a distinct individual spirit of one’s own, but also an intellect, with all the known attributes of intellectual knowledge, and desire for know-

readiness. 'I am very happy. I have been growing happier for a long time.' Life is very pleasant, very good.'

'Life lived with Canon Gabriel must be good,' Genevieve said, recognising quickly the source of this new happiness.

'Yes; it has been. I have always known that, always felt it.'

'Why are you speaking of it as past?'

'Am I doing so? I did not know. I hope it is not past; but one cannot tell.'

'One cannot tell for long. But you are going back to it now. Surely that contents you for the present?'

'It would content me if it were so,' Mr. Severne said. 'But though I am not going back to it now, I am not discontented. As I told you, I am very happy.'

'You are not going back?'

'Not to-night.'

'Then you are going to Usselby?' Genevieve said, with a sudden feeling of mingled envy and satisfaction.

The latter element changed in a moment to regret.

'Yes: I am going there,' he said; 'Canon Gabriel has given me permission to go. I had trouble in persuading him; but he consented at last. . . . You will believe that I am glad to go?'

Genevieve was silent for a time.

'Yes; I believe that,' she said presently. 'I should be glad to go myself; but I am not glad that you should go.'

'Are you not? . . . I—I thought you would be very glad! There is no one else; and I cannot bear to think of him lying there with no one but Jael and old Charlock near him.'

'You are sure, then, that he is very ill?' the girl asked in quivering tones.

'I am afraid he is. . . . Dr. Armitage doesn't say much; but what he does say isn't assuring. . . . But I must be off. . . . Can I take any—any message, or anything?'

Genevieve stood there a long time with her hand on the stile. She was quite silent. It seemed as if the tumult in her heart made words impossible. A dozen little sentences were chosen, and rejected for one reason or another. What could she say?

'Come with me to the door; and I will give you something that will speak for me,' she said presently. Then she brought out the

willing, loving, ready sacrifice. He had given all that a man may give—his life—and he had laid it down for his friend, for his two friends. ‘It was as much for my sake as for yours, George,’ she said, ‘for yours as much as for mine.’ It was in the silence and loneliness of the night that she spoke to herself. Life was very lonely now, very full of negations and misgivings. Only hope remained, vibrating through the days, running in and out like a silken thread of blue all across the gray web that Fate was weaving. The next shuffle might be filled with strands of gold and silver; the pattern might be changed to a shining arabesque of fruits and flowers. It is good sometimes to think what good may be. It is never good to refuse to see aught but ill. The fearful are seldom brave, seldom patient. Hope is the very centre and mainspring of long-sufferance. No beatitude was pronounced to the despairing.

CHAPTER LXII.

‘I HAVE DARED AND DONE. SO NOW I WILL TRY TO SLEEP.’

‘But this is human life : the war, the deeds,
The disappointment, the anxiety,
Imaginations, struggles, far and nigh,
All human ; bearing in themselves this good
That they are still the air, the subtle food,
To make us feel existence, and to show
How quiet death is.’

KEATS : *Endymion*.

GENEVIEVE’S hope was not deferred to the point of heart-sickness. As the clear, cold January days went on the messages from Usselby become more and more buoyant and gladdening. George was able to sit up all day—to read for hours at a time. With the first mild February morning came the news that Dr. Armitage had said that his patient would be out on the moors before the end of another week. Netherbank was not far from the moors.

Let but a few more weeks pass, and the wild cherry would be in bloom, and the crab-apple trees, and Birkrigg Gill would be ankle-deep with wild-flowers again, and musical with birds as wild as the flowers were. And the cuckoo would be there upon

Not only in the wide district known as Murk-Marishes, but far beyond, the knowledge that the master of Usselby was laid low by sickness awoke a spontaneous and intensely anxious interest—an interest which seemed almost unaccountable on the surface of it.

What is that subtle sign by which souls recognise their peers? What is that strange personal attraction which is so much more than personal? What is there in the complex depths of human character, human nature, that betrays, without word or deed, the elevation of soul which is the habitual breath of this man's life or of that? All against our will we are reduced to the confession of Shakespeare's Lucretia :

'I think him so, because I think him so.'

Though the December days were bright and keen, they yet dragged heavily at Netherbank. Noel Bartholomew was working persistently; not all his wearing anxiety for his friend might stay him from working. It was as if he were impelled by some motive outside his own consciousness. Not till the last hour of sufficient light had gone by did he lay aside his palette, and make his way rapidly over the bleak, lone heights of Langbarugh Moor to Usselby. He might not enter—Dr. Armitage had forbidden that; but the daily message was something, whether it came from Mr. Severne or from George Kirkoswald himself—it was something. Oftenest it came from the latter, and then the painter's heart was made glad, and the gladness passed from him to another heart. Frequently Genevieve stood on the edge of the moor above the house, while her father was making his inquiries, waiting there patiently, watching the dim window where the light burned, and watching prayerfully. Had not her cross its inscription? 'Be not afraid!'

But the days were fast coming when her faith's whole strength was to be tested. The crisis was at hand. Dr. Armitage rode to Usselby three times daily, and three times daily his words went abroad over the country-side. They amounted to the same each time: 'The crisis is at hand; a few days, a few hours, may decide.'

'Decide what? His life or death, and my life or death?' Genevieve said to herself passionately when the words were

powered, his whole nature merged, in the ecstasy of a bird's song.

'It is ecstasy in the daytime : it is double ecstasy in the night when the world is still, when darkness is upon the land, when the bird sings only to God and to you—to you alone of all the living breathing millions upon the earth.

Still the woodlark sang on, singing his thrilling, rippling, half-glad, half-plaintive song, burdened with meanings unutterable, unutterable and incomprehensible, yet turning surely upon the things that belong to the rest to be, its certain sweet acceptableness, its undreamed depths of beauty and satisfyingness.

'Now one feels,' Bartholomew said softly, 'how Keats must have suffered in his brief life before he could have written that ode. Poets are said to be "cradled into poetry by wrong." I think one has to be cradled into full appreciation of poetry by suffering of some kind. Who that did not long for rest would care for this ?

"Darkling I listen ; and for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful death,
Call'd him soft names in many a musèd rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath ;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy !
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod."

'And you are tired, father, or you would not care for it so much just now,' Genevieve said.

They were going homeward in the still starlight.

'Yes,' Bartholomew acknowledged. 'I am tired ; I am very tired.'

'It is partly because of your sleeplessness. If I lie awake for two or three hours I am wearied. And you lose whole nights, one after another. . . . I wish you did not sleep so badly, father !'

'Then remember your wish, dear, when you know that I am sleeping better.'

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The next morning, Sunday morning, though it was but February, yet had all the attributes that George Herbert strung so finely together. It was sweet, and cool, and calm, and bright—calm as

man to dread the latter with a shrinking, unrelieved, and daily-growing dread.

Yet he suffered his dread in unbroken silence, in perfect-seeming calmness. His devotion to his work accounted in part for his power to control all outward manifestation of inward discomposure. The *Ænone* was finished at last, and downcast though the man might be, he could not resist the thrill of satisfaction that came to him one morning when he drew the curtain aside after refraining resolutely from doing so for some days. His satisfaction was of a curious and mingled kind. It was all but impersonal. That a thing of beauty had been created to be a joy for ever was more to him than the fact that he had created it. That wan, sweet, uplifted face, sorrowful with a touching and lonely sorrow, suggestive with an infinite suggestiveness, would utter things too deep for words when the hand that had painted it was at rest for evermore. That the picture—though it was not faultless—was yet a noble and impressive picture he could not fail to see. Yet no touch of pride marred his emotion, and the glow of gladness was but a transitory thing. Inevitably reaction set in, and sadness came down, brooding like a mist athwart the face and figure of the golden-haired and beautiful-browed *Ænone*.

A day or two later he stood before his completed *Judas*. This also was a full-length figure, standing

‘Beneath the olive’s moon-pierced shade,’

not far from the place where his Master was even then kneeling in that last agony in the garden.

On the face of the *Judas* also there was an agony; though the kiss was not yet given, there was agony, an agony of doubt, of temptation, that was all but overwhelming. The price—the thirty pieces of silver—was in his hand; but he had not yet earned his price. He had yet to earn it, this he knew, and of this knowledge was born the anguish on his face, an anguish that a man might be constrained to pity, though he might never pardon the pitiless deed that came of that deliberation. The picture was powerful, fascinating rather than beautiful. The pale, intellectual, inscrutable face was a face to haunt you in any hour of life when you might be open to opposing influences. Yet, though it haunted

see the red-tiled roofs of Swarthcliff beginning to glitter in the morning sun. 'Bright blue, bright green, bright red,' he said to himself. 'To render that with any truth one would certainly fall into crudeness, while the word is simply sacrilege applied to the scene itself.'

Who does not know the way in which thought seems persistently to wrest itself from some boding momentous thing, and turn to any irrelevant trifle that may offer itself? There is no great hour of our life that has not its small associations. If you sit by a dying bed you shall see the pattern on the coverlet; and while you wait for the word that is to decide your whole life's fate, you shall see grotesque faces in the fire so distinctly that they become graven on your mind's eye for evermore.

A thrilling flood of song from the sycamore-tree by the opposite gate seemed to arouse Bartholomew for a moment, to remind him that the unopened letter was still in his hand. He looked at it. 'Mr. Montacute's handwriting is very excellent,' he said, turning back again, and sauntering toward the stile.

It was a thrush that was singing its spring prelude in the leafless sycamore. It hardly stayed its song while Bartholomew passed underneath, going upward between the great dark whin-bushes, and the straggling briar-sprays where the last-year's leaves still lingered in tones of dusky gold and crimson and green. Genevieve, looking out from her little window under the thatch, was glad to see him going up to the moor in the still Sunday sunshine. 'He will come back with some appetite for his breakfast this morning,' she said, as she stood twining the lengths of her rippling golden hair. Presently she paused, stooping to the window again, watching her father as if drawn to watch him by some new and sudden springing of new affection. So she stood till the dark figure went up over the ridge and disappeared in the yellow sunlight that was upon the moorland hills above the sapphire sea.

'The people who watched when Moses went up to the Mount of God must have seen him disappear so,' the girl said reverently. She was still standing by the window in the thatch.

If the silence had been great on the hillside, it was sublime upon the heights of Langbarugh Moor. The leagues of brown heather stretched darkly away on every side; the stalks of the

He always did his best, and he always knew when others did their best, and gave them credit for it generously.

'If Mr. Kirkswald recovers, as I trust he will,' he said one evening, 'his recovery will be largely due to Mr. Severne's nursing: I may say to his devotion. I have not often seen anything like it. He seems able to do without sleep for a quite unlimited period.'

The morning wore on; and about noon the weather changed. The sky darkened suddenly, the wind rose, showers of biting sleet came driving up from the north-east. Work had not seemed possible before, and it was less possible now.

'I will go up to Usselby,' Bartholomew said. 'I must go. I cannot endure this any longer.'

'You will let me go with you?' Genevieve said pleadingly.

'In this storm, my child, and with that thin white face? It is out of the question. But trust me. I will not keep you in suspense one moment longer than is inevitable. Be quiet, little one; be good, as good and quiet as you have been all through.'

'Tell me honestly what you are thinking now, my father?'

'You will believe in my honesty?'

'To the last letter.'

'Then during the past hour I have been possessed by a hopefulness for which I cannot account. It seems like vision, like sight. Scenes come before me, *and stay*, and George is in them always.'

The sleety hail was rattling upon the windows when he went out; the trees were tossing against a dark sky that broke here and there, letting through a cold steely glare that was worse than the darkness. All the way across Langbarugh Moor he had to contend against the bitter weather that had come to rave about the last hours of the dying year.

Old Jael answered his muffled knock. 'T' doctor's here,' she said. 'He's been here all t' daäy; an' there's noä chaänge, not yet. But there'll be chaänge afore long, Ah reckon. T' fever's about as high as it can be; an' he's been wanderin' all t' neet—wanderin' on about you an' miss, for t' most part; an' thinkin' he heerd her singin'. Ah guess 'twas another sort o' singin' he heerd, and it made me shiver when he talked on it. I've heerd it mysel'

was certain, at least, to be written in courteous terms. . . . So thinking, he gathered the pink-tipped daisy.

Then, at last, he essayed to open the letter. Through all other thoughts and enjoyments, and quick vivid impressions, he had been steadily recognising the fact that the moment must come. His face grew rigid to his own consciousness ; his gray lips closed firmly ; his hand was upon the envelope. . . . What was it that arrested him, stayed him ? . . . Was it a sudden cry close at hand ? It was only a plover's cry, a long sharply-wailing note, ' Weke-aye-woëke ! Weke-aye-woëke ! '

After a little while the beautiful thing with its curling crest, and its white and green and blue-black feathers, came tumbling by in its insane flight, like a bird with broken wings and uncertain instincts about its destination. Presently there came another and another, and the wailing melancholy cry seemed to come from every part of the lone wide moor, ' Weke-aye-woëke ! Weke-aye-woëke ! '

No other sound could have broken the stillness so greatly, and yet have harmonized with it so completely. Bartholomew sat with his thin nervous hand upon the letter ; close to him a tall red spiral dock was quivering slightly in the hardly perceptible air that stirred upon the upland. Was there any refreshment in the air for the gray pallid man who was lying with his head among the withered heather-bells ? Did he still feel the charm of that wild plaintive cry that was upon the moorland hills about him everywhere ?

All through the day the plovers went on crying in the soft sunshine, ' Weke-aye-woëke ! weke-aye-woëke ! weke-aye-woëke ! '

'The danger is over. My patient is asleep ; and the fever has subsided rapidly. . . . If all goes well he will be as hungry as a hunter by this time to-morrow.'

There was a white figure standing watching by the stile when the doctor's dog-cart began to descend the road that led down from the moor; but the figure fled swiftly, hearing voices on the wind. Genevieve knew that it was her father and Dr. Armitage who were coming down together ; but she could not wait there for the news they might be bringing. 'Is it life? Is it, is it death?' she said half audibly, standing in the firelight with clasped hands and bowed head. She was trembling violently when her father came in ; her eyes were looking out toward him eagerly, wildly, almost uncomprehendingly ; her strength was gone. She put out her two hands, and fell into his arms with a cry.

'Tell me the worst, my father.'

Then he kissed her, again and again he kissed her.

'There is no worst, my darling. There is no worst. . . . God has been very good.'

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There is no thankfulness like the thankfulness of relief. There is no quiet like the quiet that comes when long and intense anxiety is at an end, and the end is the end we have wished and prayed for.

Both Bartholomew and his daughter had had more of dread and less of hope than they quite knew. We never do know the full depths of a suspense until the end of suspense has declared itself, and upon no man does the shock of the worst come so hardly as upon him who has believed himself prepared to face it.

As life passes on, the great deliverances are received more and more quietly, more and more with hidden, abiding gratitude. It is the unworn, the untried, who are overjoyed, and who hold that the terror that is past can have none like to it. Every spring prepares for winter ; and though each calamity has its limit, you shall not discern how near the boundary of the next calamity lies to this.

Next day, New Year's Day it was, Noel Bartholomew went up once more across the moor and through the tossing pinewoods. He was alone again, the day being too cold and threatening to

'That is what he will be always,' she said to herself, sitting down on the top step of the stile. The celandine was wide open to the sun now. The crowing of the cock in the farmyard at Hunsgarth came dreamily through the air; the pigeons were pecking about in the stubble. Far away in the blue distance a few white-sailed ships were seen.

'That is what he will always be,' she went on saying; 'a friend who will help me, and teach me, and make my life fuller and sweeter, and more complete than a lonely life can ever be.' It amazed her now to think how contented she had been with her loneliness; how little she had cared for that finer and more perfect sympathy and confidence for which she yearned now. She had hardly yet tasted of this greater good; not once had there been an hour of unreserve, of communion of thought and feeling, of that subtle interchange of the best elements of two natures, that 'running of two souls into one,' which is the essence of all worthy and valuable human intercourse everywhere. This was yet to be.

Genevieve had no doubts now. Up to the measure of her capacity she could gauge his. She knew that there was more in him, more of character, of power, of goodness, than he had ever made evident by word or deed. And she was not over-estimating him. She had not always counted him perfect. But for this illness of his which had drawn her entirely to tenderness, to forgiveness, it is possible that the misgivings she had had might have crystallized and taken form. She knew that she had blamed him in her own mind for his want of trust and confidence in her; nay, she had blamed him openly and had told him openly, that he had failed—failed in insight, failed to give her credit for that larger grasp of things which is not always denied to a woman.

And for a long time she had been unable to shake off the effects of that shock she had received in the drawing-room at Yarrell Croft. Time and thought—the softened thought that had come when George Kirkoswald was lying on the border-lands of existence—had all but erased the dark vestige of that day; but Genevieve was making up her mind steadily to a fuller and more complete erasure of all the marks and stains which that experience had left. 'It will be better to speak of it,' she said as she sat

critical moment of his own illness had gone by. And less than an hour after he had so said he perceived to his utter dismay that Mr. Severne was lying back in the big armchair that he used always, pallid, faint, and only half conscious. Jael came quickly. Ben saddled his master's horse and went hurrying down in the dim evening light for Dr. Armitage. The doctor saw at a glance how it was. The faintness was over, and the shivering fit that had followed was over, but other signs were written only too plainly.

He knew it all himself; he had seen too many fever cases of late not to know.

'I am not afraid,' he said, 'and the Canon is not afraid; so you will let me go home—to the Rectory, I mean, now while I may go.' And though Dr. Armitage objected, and George Kirkoswald besought him to remain, he went on pleading: 'Let me go home to my own room. I do not wish to seem obstinate; but please let me go home!'

And so when the morning came he was taken to the Rectory, back to his own sombre room, that was all hung with dark blue, and where all his own small treasures had been arranged to his satisfaction. The two narrow windows looked northward. The sun was shining on the paddock below when he went in; the shadows of the leafless trees stirred on the grass, birds were piping cheerily.

'This is good,' he said, his parched lips parting into a smile. 'This *is* good. I have always said the birds in the Rectory trees sang more sweetly than any other birds. I wanted to hear them. I wanted to see the field with the sunshine on it again. . . . Now I have all I wanted: it is very good.'

For a day or two Dr. Armitage hoped that his first impression had been a mistaken one. The young man lay so calm, so still, and bore the pain and the strong thirst that was upon him so uncomplainingly, that his nervous system was quieter far than George Kirkoswald's had been; and this gave a better chance, and offered a straw for hopefulness to catch. But it was no more than a straw; to be utterly consumed in that dread fever-flame that was burning away the youth's life so quickly—so quickly and yet so quietly, so silently.

Nothing could have been more out of keeping with the dreary barren moorland than the appearance of Miss Richmond, as she swept between the sombre whin-brakes and the great scarred boulders that seemed to speak so plainly of some ancient cataclysm, some clashing of Nature's stongest forces. They did not speak to her; nothing spoke to her up there. The monotony of Langbarugh Moor was as the monotony of her own drawing-room; and the moor had the disadvantage of being less becoming as a background to a figure dressed with all the finish and elegance that the toilette of a fashionably-dressed woman demands. Still there was room to move, and to a woman who can move gracefully movement is a pleasure though there be no witness of her gracefulness. Diana Richmond liked to know that if anyone had been there her rich bronze silk dress, with its trimmings of velvet of the same changeful colour, was a thing in perfect taste. She liked to watch it changing from green to gold in the sunlight, and deepening to a bronzed brown where it fell into shadow; and she was aware that her large Rembrandt hat, which was made of the same velvet, and trimmed with curling feathers of the same varying tints, was almost a picture of itself. These were new satisfactions, and they added to the old—the old pride, the old pleasure in her own great beauty. Surely to be very beautiful must be to have little left to desire in this world!

This was not always Miss Richmond's opinion; it was not her opinion this afternoon as she walked alone on the edge of the moorland. Her brother had gone to stay for a few days at Burland Brooms, where Sir John Burland lived, who was a widower, and who was—so the world was saying—a warm admirer of Miss Richmond's. But nothing within her had responded to his admiration so far. 'It is strange,' she said, half audibly, 'it is strange even to myself that I should never have cared truly but for one man, and that that one man should be an insignificant-looking artist of no particular birth, and no particular attractiveness. It is stranger still that I can move him to neither love nor hate, to neither liking nor scorn. I have moved other men to all these; but I cannot touch him—him I cannot touch. If fate should give me the power to crush him to his death, I should not move him from his cold indifference.'

'Tears !' said Sir Galahad, with the old look of wonder coming into his round blue eyes. 'Why should she cry ? Why should it be sorrow ? Oh ! tell her—tell them all that death is not sorrowful. . . . Why have we made it so ? Why do people think of it with dread, when it is so beautiful, so fair, so calm a thing ? . . . Three nights ago I heard the wings of the Angel of Death about my bed, rushing with the rhythm and sweep of music ; and there was a Face I could not see, and a Voice I could not hear—not clearly. . . . But when the time comes I shall see plainly, and the Voice will speak distinctly, and I shall go—*I shall go with Him*. Can you think that is a sorrow ?'

The Canon's lips trembled as he spoke :

'It does not seem sorrowful to me,' he said. 'But I am old, and full of years ; and I shall be glad to be at rest. . . . But you . . .'

'Does it take years to make one weary ? I have been weary a long time ; and I have wished for rest a long time. . . . Now I am going where there will be no more weariness.'

Then the blue eyes closed as if in sleep for a little while, but the lips went on murmuring half unconsciously at intervals.

'You will tell her,' he said. 'You will tell her about the lilies. I planted them for her ; they are in the shrubbery, down where the larkspurs grow. When they are in bloom she will come and gather them, and take them home. Tell her I would have taken them. I meant to take them to her. I planted them all for her. And there are some lilies-of-the-valley, too. Roses of Sharon and lilies-of-the-valley. . . . A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon. . . . Awake ! O north wind, and come, thou south, and blow upon my garden !'

And still the fever increased, and delirium increased with it, but the visions were the same, the same peace was in them, the same simple, spiritual beauty.

And on to the end it was the same. Not once might fear touch him ; not once might dismay enter into him.

Though the Valley of the Shadow of Death be dark, if He walk with us there, in Whose Right Hand are the morning stars that sing together, and in Whose Eyes is the radiance of that love that led to the Cross and the grave, we shall not fear the darkness.

yellow sunlight lingered upon it, so that no unusual pallor was there. Was it the sunlight that made him look so noble, so beautiful, so grand? Was it the sunlight that had taken away all trace of care, all record of contact with human lowness, and narrowness, and hardness? Was it the light of this every-day sun that had so lifted him, even in seeming, so far above himself, above her recognition of him, above her power of comprehension and appreciation?

Perhaps he might be dreaming. Who could say through what worlds a soul like his might not wander when sleep freed it for awhile from the bonds of physical existence? Who could say what converse this man's spirit might be holding even as his body lay there upon the barren moor?

Such was the presence of him as he lay that even Diana Richmond was moved to thoughts like these. The complacent smile faded from her lips imperceptibly. She sat down on a stone near him, gently, quietly, as if fearing to awaken him.

Some time she sat watching there. She did not dream once of what he might think if he were to awaken, and find her there by his side. She did not try for one moment to imagine what she should say or do, or how she should look when he awakened.

Long afterwards she knew that from the first moment when she had seen his face, she had had no thought of his awakening. Yet she could never tell when or how fear had entered into her heart. Was it fear? It was so soft a thing, so beautiful, and it came so gently. This could not be fear.

Still she sat watching there. The sunlight had left the face, left it in paleness and wanness, but still in great and reverent nobleness. His head was lying back upon the dead heather, the gray hair stirred in the light wind that came like a sigh across the moor. In his hand there was a letter—an unopened letter, and upon it a daisy—one little closed, drooping, pink-tipped daisy.

Presently Miss Richmond, still moving with all gentleness and quietness, knelt down by his side. Then she called him softly by his name.

'Will you not speak to me?' she said in a soft whisper, and with lips almost as pallid as the lips before her. 'Will you not speak one word? Will you not let me tell you all the truth? If

piped his short winter note in the boughs of a tall alder-tree ; the bushes of rosemary in the graveyard were fresh and green ; the golden yews were tinted with russet red. There was life everywhere, and promise of life to be.

‘This is nature’s sleep,’ the Canon said, ‘and his sleep is like to it. There is no violent break in the passing year. There is change, but there is also a visible continuity. The night of death, such death as his, is but as the summer night when the sun scarce dips below the horizon for an hour. When the sunset ended, and when the sunrise began, you shall hardly know though you watch ever so closely.’

When Mrs. Severne went away she took with her, for her great consolation, the portrait of her son that Mr. Bartholomew had painted. It was a gift from George Kirkoswald, and the Canon added another small gift ; the latter was a piece of folded paper.

‘It is only an old man’s thought done into words,’ he said ; ‘but it is one that may soothe you a little when the privilege of trying to do so is mine no longer.’

The thought had come in the silence of the night. It was meant for no eye but hers, yet if it have comfort for any other it may be written here.

IN MEMORIAM.

E. S.

‘Yea, weep for awhile, let the hot, slow tears fall sadly,
Since Jesus wept by the grave where Lazarus lay ;
For now by a new-made grave stand many weeping—
Hush ! let us grieve ; speak not of solace to-day.

‘When the time to be healed shall come we will not refuse healing,
Gently and sweetly shall memory come to us then,
Bearing with hands wide-folded the fragrant amaranth,
Flowerets of deeds done never for praise of men.

‘Fair white roses of love, and halms of compassion,
Tendrils of pity that clung to the homeless and poor,
Violets of graceful humility, seeking the shadow,
Passion-flowers plucked from the Cross where he learnt to endure.

‘We will lovingly whisper of deeds done in secret and silence,
Of wretchedness sought in the haunts where the wretched hide,
Of sorrow relieved, of sorrow foreseen and averted,
Of Christ-like sympathy, ceaseless, and priceless, and wide.

‘Beauteous his life was, and beauteous, too, was the passing
From life that now is to the life that for ever shall be ;
We mourn him, they welcome, the angels who dwell in that City,
And sing to the sound of the harp by the crystal sea.’

pine-woods of Usselby, that cry still came. To her life's end it would come, and it would be full of pain, and dark terror, and mingled accusations and threatenings. To her life's end the plover's note would be to her what the scent of the Basil-plant must have been always to those brothers of Florence—a thing that no self-banishment nor other self-inflicted suffering might deprive of its remorseless power.

And while Diana Richmond was hurrying downward from the moor with white, stricken face and trembling form, Genevieve Bartholomew was leisurely drawing the curtains, and lighting the lamps, and placing her own little table by her father's chair.

'Surely he will come back to me for his cup of afternoon tea,' she was saying. 'He can never think that Jael's tea is as good as mine. . . . I shall scold him a little when he comes back.'

CHAPTER LXIV.

'THITHER OUR PATH LIES : WIND WE UP THE HEIGHTS.'

'He has outsoared the shadows of our night.

Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
And that unrest which men miscall delight,
Can touch him not and torture not again.

From the contagion of the world's slow stain
He is secure ; and now can never mourn

A heart grown cold, a head grown gray, in vain '

SHELLEY : *Adonais* .

THERE is often something that is both delightful and memorable about the state of convalescence. Men unused to illness find recovery from illness to be bewilderingly pleasant, and are sometimes tempted to make the most of it. For this, however, certain conditions are indispensable. A quiet sunny house between the moor and the sea is good ; a comfortable reading-chair, and an abundance of books, new and old, are good ; to have perfect peace of mind about your worldly affairs is good ; and to know that there is someone whose greatest earthly desire is your recovery is also good. But even these are not all-sufficient. Solitude is apt to pall at such times, and to have no mother or

beautiful face again. . . . But why do you say "terrible"? There has been no terror. There is none now.'

Bartholomew paused.

'I suppose I used the word thoughtlessly,' he said, 'since the terribleness that may undoubtedly be connected with the idea of death has never rooted itself as an impression in my mind. I will not say that I have not known dread, but I think it is certainly true that God permits the fear of death when it is intended that a man should live, and takes it away when it is intended that he shall die.'

'You speak as if it were going from yourself?'

'It has gone.'

Genevieve laid her hand on her father's arm, and looked into his eyes. There was only affection there, and patient endurance, and a quiet light lighting these to new beauty.

'I will not say I long for death,' the artist went on. 'There are many reasons why I should not desire it yet. But since—since that morning the idea of it has been very present with me. And, like all ideas that remain persistently, it has grown and widened within me till it fills a large space.'

'Is it the idea of death that has so widened?' the Canon asked, 'or is it the idea of what is beyond?'

'Mainly of what is beyond. The passing is a mere falling asleep. We die daily. Sleep is as mysterious as death. I do not say that death is not mysterious; the life after death is more full of mystery still, and no new ray of light is ever thrown there. But I think that since we human beings have done much by our dark and ignorant conceptions to invest the life to come with human alarms and misgivings, it is only fitting that we should now try to disencumber the spiritual ground of the old tangled overgrowths of childish terrorism, and low speculative ideas of the vengeance of a God Whose wrath has been preached to us till we cannot, dare not, grasp the thesis of His love. Putting aside for the moment the accepted views of the sure and certain hope of the Christian creed, I think that the merest glimpse into the vastnesses of the universal order of things assures to us a wider—and if I may say it—a more attractive and congenial futurity than most theologians venture to promise us. To the ordinary human

all else. Nothing that had happened had really lessened or impaired it. He knew that now—he had known it all through his illness. Even in his saddest and most desponding moments Genevieve's face had come before him just as he had seen it last on that evening when he had spoken of going abroad. The sudden pallor, the sudden silence, the sudden intense yet subdued emotion had had more meaning for him later, than at the time. And he could never forget the look which had been on her face and in her eyes when he had said, with a twofold meaning in his words :

‘ Shall I come down again, Miss Bartholomew ?’

And she had replied :

‘ Yes ; come again before you go away.’

Even as she spoke he had known that her generous, truthful words had prevented his going at all ; and he had known also that this was not the most they had done. Her simple desire, so simply expressed, had meant a thousand things to him since then, and each one of them was as precious as it was nameless and undefined. All this, and more, was behind the mood that he was in as he sat there writing, pouring out his highest and best and most passionate aspirations with the full certainty that they would be understood and responded to.

‘ I've writ all day, yet told you nothing,’

he said, thinking he was near the end of his letter. But that was a long way from the end. Not till the light began to fade, and Jael came in with a cup of tea and a pair of candles, was the envelope sealed and laid ready for Noel Bartholomew to take down to Netherbank the next day.

This was hardly done when the heavy knocker sounded upon the hall door, clanging with a wild impetuosity that was strangely startling on such a day, and at such an hour. George rose to his feet as by an impulse of alarm ; and Jael and old Ben went to the door together. The dim passages seemed to be filled with a great and sudden dread.

From the door of his own room George Kirkoswald saw that it was Miss Richmond who stood there in the dark-blue twilight.

‘ What is it ?’ he said gently, going up to her, taking her hand,

ledge ; thought, and power to use thought ; will, and power to exercise will ; affection, and desire to expend and receive affection ; and all these increased and heightened to a degree we do not dream of here ? And could anyone for a moment imagine it possible that a being so endowed with the powers of life would have no social and intellectual life to put such powers into requisition ? Is it conceivable that no services save services of song would be demanded of him ? Growth and advancement and achievement will surely be expected of us there, as here ; and these things mean effort and action, and response to ever-increasing depths and heights of Divine influence. . . . It hath not entered into the heart of man, that full conception of what will be, it can never enter here ; but assuredly we might open our minds, and not be afraid to open them to such conceptions as even human reason may attain by the light of the Spirit, and reverent effort to arrive at the truer and fuller meaning of such revelation as has been made. It is within the grasp of the least vivid understanding to believe that—

“There shall never be one lost good ! What was, shall live as before ;
The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound ;
What was good, shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more ;
On the earth the broken arcs ; in the heaven a perfect round.

“All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good, shall exist ;
Not its semblance, but itself ; no beauty, nor good, nor power,
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.”

Genevieve was listening, thinking. It was becoming easier to recognise the fact that that other world, that other life, was only a continuance of this. He who had so recently gone had just slipped quietly and peacefully away, as some people like to do when they are going on a journey. ‘If he were to come back again, “I should not feel it to be strange,”’ she said to herself. She was sorrowing with a deep and silent sorrow, knowing that she had lost that rare possession, a true and faithful and loyal friend. His face came before her always just as she had seen it last when he stood in the light that fell from the cottage window. If she stood on the steps in the evening now she could always see it there. If she spoke, she felt he heard.

It was impossible not to see that there had been sacrifice,

much of human love. First has come the love between man and woman—first and last. Then something has been said—not too much—of the love of a mother for her children. The love that may be, that often is, between father and daughter has been, comparatively speaking, neglected. Cordelia is less popular as a heroine than Juliet, Ophelia, or Desdemona.

And yet this love is very precious, very potent. Though a woman know no other love, she shall yet lack none of love's best beatitudes.

So long as there is one to whom she may say 'Father,' so long that name shall stand between her and ill she then may not even dream of ; so long will protection be hers, and sheltering care ; so long will there be one to understand and believe in her ; to defend if defence be needed ; to spare her all that no woman who stands alone may ever be spared till humanity shall have touched the beginning of a new spiritual era.

While he is there—the father—all that his presence means, so far as contact with the outer world is concerned, may be unrecognised. It is when he is gone that awakening comes, and amazement ; then that a woman learns to cry in anguish, 'Oh, what men dare do ! what men may do ! what men daily do ! not knowing what they do !'

Not knowing what they do, not caring what they do, so they may but live their own narrow, self-bounded life untouched by any consequence of their deed upon other lives.

But even while the father is still in the house, still in his own chair, at his own fireside, it is felt to the full that it is good to have him there. The merest imagination picturing the empty chair shall strike you with the force of steel.

All that soft, bright Sunday Noel Bartholomew's chair by the fireside at Netherbank had been unoccupied ; and more than once, as the day went on, the look of it had touched upon Genevieve's heart strangely for the moment, bringing slight chills, causing vague shadows, and sending far-darting thought out into the sombre and subtle regions of fateful mystery.

It was not thought that could be dwelt upon or handled. Half our mental discursiveness is of too quick and elusive a kind to be grasped, or followed, or reduced to exact thinking.

the hills above, calling, calling, never weary of calling to the spring.

Was it really only a year, nay, much less than a year, since that day when George had held her hands in his with a warm, strong, passionate grasp, and had looked into her eyes beseechingly, and had asked her for her love, for her whole life's love, and she had answered, 'I am yours, I am yours always till I die'? Was it possible that it was less than ten months ago?

She had lived a life since then, and learnt a life's lessons.

Her love, which was only then dawning, only then awakening to the consciousness of the bliss and pain of love, had fathomed all the mystic depths of love's anguish since that day. Was the day of compensation at hand? Would she now know the heights as she had known the depths—the heights of love's hope, love's gain, love's ecstasy? It could hardly be that her anticipations were unreasonable. It was in the nature of things that the one extreme should assure the other. Every night had its day; every winter its spring; every ebbing tide its free full flowing. No; her hope could not be unreasonable. She might cherish it in patience, in the calm and ample region of trust, in the divine strength of faith. The springtide was coming upon the land; it had already come in the heart of Genevieve Bartholomew.

So every budding snowdrop was welcome; and every spear of the daffodil leaves a new joy. The prophetic little celandine, spreading its golden stars to the pale sun, was a thing to be mused over with rapture.

And the rapture was doubly rapturous in that it had not to be enjoyed alone. Noel Bartholomew's quiet artistic receptivity of the promise that was in the very air was something almost solemn in the silent depths of it. His work was done. He was only waiting now for the decision that was to come through Mr. Montacute; and though he still kept silence Genevieve was beginning to perceive that the waiting was unfortunate. More and more he shrank from any mention of the matter, even to her; yet she perceived that he was brooding over it. The change on his face, the sudden grayness, the sudden strangeness in his eyes, the tightening of the muscles about his mouth if anyone spoke of it, betrayed the fact that there was yet

some change, some relapse, had come upon George Kirkoswald. This was but natural, and it was consistent. If there was any darker dread it would surely be kept behind.

Still the time went on. The young moon sank over the edge of Langbarugh Moor; the gusts swept up the reedy Marishes; the kitchen clock ticked loudly, monotonously. Would nothing break that strange stillness, that heavy silence?

Ah! there, at last, there was a footstep on the stubble-field. Genevieve drew the curtain back so as to throw a light outside; then she ran to the door, and stood peering into the darkness made visible.

'It is you, my father? It is you?' she cried, with the gladness of a little child, and holding out her two white hands to the dark figure that was coming nearer. . . . It had come, and was grasping her hands with a strong, kind grasp, and was leading her into the house, understanding, pitying all her sudden silence, her wordless wonder and dismay.

'You did not expect to see me, my child?' Canon Gabriel said, speaking with a new and grave gentleness. 'But come in, dear; come in. The evening is very chill; come indoors.'

CHAPTER LXVI.

IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

'Alas! I only wish'd I might have died
 With my poor father: wherefore should I ask
 For longer life?
 O, I was fond of misery with him;
 E'en what was most unlovely grew beloved
 When he was with me. O, my dearest father,
 Beneath the earth now in deep darkness hid,
 Woin as thou wert with age, to me thou still
 Wert dear, and shall be ever.'

SOPHOCLES: *Edipus Coloneus*.

THEY went into the little room where the pine-knots were blazing; the tea-tray standing by the arm-chair cosily; the footstool drawn quite near.

he said, putting the easel with the wet canvas upon it into a safe corner.

It was hardly yet twilight ; but the best of the day was gone. It was a satisfaction to Mr. Bartholomew that it had not gone by unprofitably ; and it was a sort of satisfaction that Genevieve knew to be particularly grateful to him. The healing and soothing that he found in his work was the best of all soothing, or, at any rate, next best to that which came to him in the voices from the hills, and from the large lone sea.

'You will go out for a walk, father?' Genevieve said as they lingered over their cup of afternoon tea.

Dr. Armitage had left his cheery message. A package had come from Mrs. Winterford during the day containing a chalice-shaped vase of rose-red Venetian glass, and some beautiful Burano lace. Then a precious little note had come from Canon Gabriel, who had been to Usselby, and had gone back to the Rectory so glad, so satisfied, that his gladness had run over, filling another cup. It was a red-letter day ; and the close of it was gratitude and peace : peace within and peace without, with Nature's great stillness brooding over all in sympathy.

They went out of doors together, the father and daughter. There was a young moon, the merest rim of silver in a luminous arctic heaven of dark-blue ether, deepening to indigo above, paling and changing to dusky daffodil-yellow below. The stars were coming out one by one. The landscape stood in still mystic darkness against the clear sky. Not a tree stirred, not a sound broke the silence, till suddenly a woodlark burst into song as full, as perfect, as sweet, as touching, as the song of any nightingale that ever poured her plaintive anthem across the valley-glades of the south. For a minute or two the artist was perplexed, believing that it was the nightingale's song he heard ; then he remembered, and recognised the note that came from the leafless whitethorn overhead.

He stood quite close to the foot of the tree ; his daughter's hand was on his arm ; they listened almost breathlessly.

Keats's '*Ode to a Nightingale*,' Shelley's poem '*To the Skylark*,' must seem strangely far fetched and over-elaborated pieces of sentiment to one who has never felt his whole being over-

who might have gone to her death as Agnes and Perpetua went to theirs ; and who therefore might meet the tidings of the death of him who was nearest and dearest to her with something of the same courage with which she would have met the sentence of her own death, with something of the same martyr heroism, something of the same Christian fortitude.

‘Yes, my child,’ he said, ‘it concerns you, even as it concerns himself. His emotion was such that he could not come here, to-night. He asked me to come. . . . He has asked me more than that. . . . He has asked me if I would be to you a friend . . . a father.’

So it was that knowledge came—the knowledge that she had no other father.

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No cry went upward. No word broke the silence.

‘I tell you, hopeless grief is passionless ;
That only men incredulous of despair,
Half-taught in anguish, through the midnight air
Beat upward to God’s throne in loud access
Of shrieking and reproach.’

For a long time Genevieve lay with her head on Canon Gabriel’s arm, stricken, but not unconscious ; bereaved, yet knowing all that she might then know of her bereavement. All that she might know then. No bereaved woman ever knows all in that first moment when death has but just closed the eyes that were ever open to watch and guard her ; but just sealed the lips that were ever eloquent at her need.

It is Time—Time, the healer of other griefs, that tears open this wound afresh at every point of contact with a hard and blind, a self-seeking and ungenerous world.

The arrangement is merciful. If foresight were added to the anguish of loss, then were grief beyond consolation. The arrangement that denies consciousness of aught save that one form lying peacefully in the arms of Azrael is most merciful.

After a time Genevieve raised her head and looked with tearless eyes into the Canon’s face again, and spoke with quivering lips :

‘I have not misunderstood ?’ she said, speaking as people speak who awake from the effect of some anæsthetic that has confused

only Sunday morning in the country can be. Assuredly, if there be on earth any foretaste of heaven, it is then and there.

Bartholomew got up early; he had had another night of absolute sleeplessness, and the daylight had been welcome; the sweet clear sunshine spreading across the blueness of the morning was more welcome still. The doves came whirring and wheeling down; there was a sudden flitting of wings across the window-pane; a soft mavis note came from the thatch. The sparrows were darting vigorously hither and thither; the snowdrops hung straight and white and still. Down in the village the blue-white smoke was beginning to curl against sea and sky.

The artist sauntered along the field; it was to lie fallow this year, Miss Craven had decreed, and the weeds among the dead stubble were promising finely. A daisy or two studded the grassy edges of the lands; the swallow-wort was still sleeping on the shady side of the hedgerow near the stile; rich, green, changeful mosses were spreading everywhere.

The perfect stillness was broken presently. There was a foot-step in the lane, a figure coming upward from the village. 'It is not anyone I know,' Bartholomew said to himself as a tall dark young man came swiftly nearer. Then the artist turned, sauntering back along the field until he heard the step upon the path behind him. The young man had a letter in his hand.

'It is from Mr. Montacute,' he said politely, giving it to Bartholomew. 'I ought to have brought it over last night when I left the office; but when I got home I found my mother ill, and I was not able to leave her. . . . I hope the few hours' delay will make no difference?'

'None at all,' said Mr. Bartholomew, who had hardly heard the explanation. He spoke in a curiously absent way. 'It can make no difference. Thank you for bringing it over this morning.'

'There is not, of course, much time lost,' added the young man, turning away. 'Mr. Witherby did not come to our office till yesterday afternoon. Good-morning.'

For some minutes Bartholomew stood there between Miss Craven's weed-grown acres, holding the unopened note in his hand, looking out across the great stretch of sapphire sea that was beyond the green cliff-tops. Far off in the distance he could

'You are speaking of Mr. Richmond?'

'I am speaking of all who have done this,' the girl said, rising to her feet, and uplifting her clasped hands passionately. 'I am speaking of all who have done this—who have done my father to death. . . . There is a word, I will not use it, but all my life I shall know that there is no other word. . . . My father! my father! my father! all my life that word will ring in my ears at the thought of you!'

Yet no tears came. Her eyes were beginning to ache and burn with the hot unshed tears that were behind them; and her hands were very chill. The Canon took them again in his, and drew her gently to his side.

'Sit down, dear,' he said with that gentle loftiness in his persuasive voice that none could hear and resist. 'Sit down beside me, and let us speak of him—of your father. Let us think together of what he would say to us if he might come back for an hour. If, as it is thought, he fell asleep quite early this morning, this day will have been to him better than ten thousand days of such existence as ours. Think if he could come back ennobled in heart and brain, illumined, enrapt in the atmosphere of that world where life is love; upraised far, far above all that bound and warped and narrowed his vision here; imagine him here by us, listening to us, replying to us. . . . Can you think what reply he would make to that bitter cry you uttered just now?'

No answer came. Genevieve's white lips were closed in pain. Only her eyes betrayed that she had heard, that she understood.

'Would he not remind us,' the Canon went on, 'of that last word uttered on the Cross eighteen hundred years ago, yet echoing across the world till now for our example:

' "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!"

So your father might speak in large pity and comprehension of *your* weakness, of your excusable feeling. I cannot think that that feeling would be his. Had he not gone away, had he merely had an attack this morning similar to the one he had before, and then recovered, I cannot believe that he would for a moment have blamed anyone. I think he knew himself to be less strong than others believed him to be; I think Dr. Armitage feared some such

tall dead weeds stood still and beautiful; dark whin-brakes broke the monotony of space and line; the great gray boulders were there, looking white in the sunshine. There was a slight haze upon the far landward distances, giving that sense of mystery, of something more than is seen, which is necessary to man's fullest enjoyment everywhere.

Bartholomew went slowly onward, his foot falling softly upon the tufts of bent grass that were by the side of the stony road. He was walking carefully, as if not wishing to break that solemn stillness. There was not even a bird's song to break it; nor one thread of curling smoke for a sign of human life.

'Certainly this is perfect,' Noel Bartholomew said, stopping for a moment on the top of a heathery ridge, beyond which a narrow stony valley sloped to the south-west. The road led across the end of the valley; but the artist turned a little to the left, and sat down upon one of the gray scarred stones, with his feet upon the moss and the small beautiful bent grass which grows between the heather.

The unopened letter was still in his hand. 'I wish I could write as well as Montacute does!' he said musingly. 'It is a separate distinction in a man's life to have a handwriting like that. It is like having a good name, or a reputation for some special skilfulness.'

Still he did not open the letter. It was sealed; and the seal bore Mr. Montacute's crest, a defiant-looking eagle with a scroll in its beak. So far Bartholomew had made no attempt to break the seal. Whatever it might be that deterred him, it was some sufficiently strong and prevailing thing.

He was still sitting upon the low gray stone, leaning back against a projecting bank of heather and grass, noting the russet-red of the withered heath-bells of the year that had been, and the pink-tipped petals of the one daisy near him of the year that now was. He watched the daisy long, watching it as Dante Rossetti must have watched his 'woodspurge with the cup of three,' recognising its apparent simplicity, its real complexity, its infinite mystery of being. The little flower, with its fringe of petals and its yellow centre, was to the full as incomprehensible as the fate which had driven him on to dread the opening of a letter that

cannot take you to Usselby to-night ; that would not be possible ; but you shall go there to-morrow. You are to go home with me now, if you will be so good, so kind to an old man as to let him have the privilege of taking care of you for awhile. . . . I have left instructions about your room with my housekeeper, Mrs. Knottingley ; and the chaise that brought me here will be back again directly. I told the man to come in an hour. Can you be ready ? And your little maid, she will come with you, she will be useful and helpful to you, and she will not be a stranger. It was Mrs. Knottingley who thought of that.'

Fortunately Keturah came in whilst they were still speaking, and the Canon went to her and told her all that might be told, and gave her such instructions as were needful. Genevieve gave none. She did not move or speak. When the Canon came back and sat down again she listened, sitting beside him, pale and placid and still. The little table was there with the tea-tray on it ; the kettle was on the hearth ; the fire was dying down sadly, as if it knew that it would be relighted no more. All about the room the household treasures were lying—the pictures, the books, the flowers, the music. Were they all stricken with some strange change that they looked so ? Surely such things vary in expression, and respond to our own mood ! It was no hardship to leave these now. Keturah came in with swollen tearful face, bringing Genevieve's cloak and hat, and she stayed to put them on, wondering at her mistress's unstained face, and bright, tearless, expressionless eyes. 'Did she see anything with those eyes ?' the girl wondered. 'Was she hearing anything, understanding anything ?'

They went out all together into the blue starlit night, Genevieve leaning on Canon Gabriel's arm. He felt the shudder that shook her whole frame when Keturah locked the cottage door, turning the key with a loud click. That one shudder was the only sign.

As she went along the stubble-field her whole life there came back as in the flash that comes to the drowning man—her life and another life. . . . And this was the end, this sudden going forth in the darkness of the night with comparative strangers to seek a home in a strange house ; whilst he—he was there, far off among the pine-woods—nay, beyond the pine-woods, beyond the stars

CHAPTER LXIII.

'FULL IN THE SMILE OF THE BLUE FIRMAMENT.'

'And calmest thoughts come round us—as of leaves
Budding—fruit ripening in stillness—autumn suns
Smiling at eve upon the quiet sheaves,
* * A sleeping infant's breath—
The gradual sand that through an hour-glass runs—
A woodland rivulet—a poet's death.'

KEATS.

THE sound of the church bells came pealing across the Marishes as the clock struck ten, bursting upon the still sunny air like a psalm of joy and gladness. Genevieve was out among the snow-drops and the rich, green, bursting leaves of the lilies. She had thrown a little shawl of cream-white wool over her black silk dress; her straw garden-hat was in her hand.

'What *can* ha' got the master?' said Keturah, coming to the door with her surprised eyes more surprised than ever. 'D'ya think he's gone to Usselby Hall?'

'That, precisely, is what I am thinking,' Genevieve replied, with a sweet, patient, satisfied smile. 'And I am also thinking that I will come in and have some breakfast, since it is too late now to go to church.'

The breakfast was soon over; then Genevieve sat down and read the services for the day. It was the second morning of the month, and the psalms began with a burst of thanksgiving that seemed like an echo of the gladness that had come upon the land with the sound of the pealing bells. The bells had ceased now; silence reigned once more, silence broken only by the rush of wings and the carolling of sweet, grateful, praise-giving birds.

Then again Genevieve went out, and sauntered up and down from the tiny garden to the stile at the end of the weedy stubble-field. No fear touched her, no impatience. The longer her father stayed the more certain was it that he stayed at Usselby. What so easy to understand as George Kirkoswald's gladness to have him, and eagerness to keep him? What so good and pleasant to the imagination as the meeting of those two, her father and—her friend?

again, had it been but for one half-hour. Those pathetic eyes were not without power now that they were closed, not to be opened again till the shadows flee away in the light of the Resurrection Morning.

This February day was, as the day before had been, bright, and sunny, and unusually mild. Not a twig stirred as George Kirkoswald rode down from Usselby to inquire how Genevieve was. He did not stay long at the Rectory. The Canon had not seen Genevieve since the previous evening. He could only say that he feared that the night had gone hardly with her. She had not slept; and no tears had come to her relief.

'I promised to bring her to Usselby to-day,' the old man went on to say. 'I must keep my promise, and I think it may be well for her to see him. But I doubt—you will excuse my saying it—I doubt if she will be equal to seeing you.'

'I should not dream of expecting it,' George said.

He was looking pale, and thin, and worn, and he was still very weak. The events of the previous day had shattered him, as they could not fail to have done.

Yet it was easy to see even now that his illness and his sorrow had not been all loss. There was surely gain in the clearer light that was in his dark, deep-set eyes; in the look of large peacefulness that was upon his broad thought-lined forehead, in the finer sympathy that was written in the lines about his firm mouth. The Canon could not but wonder and be glad as he watched him riding away from the Rectory.

Was George surprised, or was he not surprised, when he rode over the brow of Langbarugh Moor to find that Diana Richmond was there, not twenty yards away from the road that led across the ridge? She turned and stood still, waiting there with her black dress dropped upon the heather, and her white face uplifted as the face of one who pleads with a judge for mercy. George dismounted, and held out his hand.

'I was coming to Yarrell,' he said, speaking gently and kindly. 'I have been anxious to know how you were, very anxious. I was not able to come over last night.'

The only answer was a half-uncomprehending stare from eyes that were heavy with long weeping. George could see now that

there, looking up at the little white sunny clouds that were drifting slowly away. 'It will be better to tell him that now I understand, now I see how he could be drawn for awhile to one like that, and then find out that he had been drawn by an illusion, that his soul was untouched, his spirit uninfluenced, his truer and higher self left lonelier than ever. All *that* I will tell him; and I will ask him to forgive—to forgive me, to forgive her. . . . I can forgive her myself now, since God has been so very good.'

So Genevieve Bartholomew was thinking as she sat there in the calm Sunday sunshine. It was evident now that her father was going to stay at Usselby for dinner. She knew that there was no one who could have come over with a note or message except old Ben Charlock, and it was quite within the possibility of things that Ben would raise some objection if he were asked to go so far for so slight a reason on a Sunday morning. 'Besides, my father will be sure that I shall guess all about it,' she said to herself, opening a copy of the 'Spiritual Voices' that was lying in her lap, and turning to its pages for that aliment which the soul needs day by day as certainly as the body needs the bread by which it lives.

And still upon Langbarugh Moor the sun was shining softly, and the weeds and the white dead grasses were glittering and quivering in the light air. Now and then a bird stirred in the whin-brake; a wood-pigeon swept by to the fir-copse; always the plovers went on crying, crying sadly, calling wildly, drifting hither and thither on uncertain, erratic wing. No other sound broke the wondrous stillness as the hours of noon went by. The peace that was on the upland was as the peace that is in the space between two worlds.

When the shadows were beginning to lengthen, a tall dark figure came slowly up between the stunted oak-trees that made a landmark on the north-west of the moor—a graceful, noticeable figure, richly dressed, and moving slowly, languidly, as became the languid afternoon.

It was Diana Richmond. What made the Sunday a heavier day than other days at Yarrell Croft? What hint of early training, of hereditary instinct, of striving spirit, prevailed to the point of producing weariness, discomfort, dissatisfaction with all things that were or had been?

myself, to win your sympathy. I say it to explain myself, my reason for coming here. I do not wish to go mad, therefore I would not brood alone over things that may make me mad. . . . I want you to listen ; that is all I want. I want you to be patient whilst I . . . whilst I tell you how I came to murder the man I loved.'

Miss Richmond paused. They had been walking onward slowly ; now she stopped and turned, looking into George Kirkoswald's face with conscious, grief-filled, earnest eyes—eyes that had no madness in them, though he looked for some, hearing the thing she said.

She understood.

'No,' she went on, 'I am quite sane. I think I must be saner than I have ever been, since I see my life so clearly. It has always seemed a confused life. I have drifted on in the dark from one rock to another. Now it is as if daylight had come, and shown me all I had passed over ; or as if someone had watched me, and then had written my life that I might see what it had been. I see it as clearly as that, and the sight is—I cannot tell you what it is. When I think of words that face comes ; it comes as I saw it yesterday, as I shall always see it—white, and cold, and grand, and dead. You will believe that then words have no meaning.'

They were still standing there in the soft sunshine. George had his hand on his horse's bridle, and at moments Bevis was impatient.

'Would it not be better if I were to go back with you to Yarrell?' he asked. 'You are looking tired. It would be wiser of you to go home. You shall tell me all there.'

'Let me tell you here,' Diana said wistfully, and turning as if to go toward the place where she had sat so long the day before. 'Let me speak here where the end came—the end of my deed. It may be that he can hear, it may be that he will forgive. . . . All night I have been asking him to forgive. I dare ask no other forgiveness till I feel his.'

They had come to the edge of the valley on the moor at last, the place where her attention had been arrested only a few hours before. She could see the stone lying in the sun. There was the

She was still sweeping languidly onward over the moor, treading on the little edges of turf, listening to the rustling sound of her silk dress upon the dead yellow bracken. Why should she go onward? Why should she go back? When she stopped a moment on the overhanging brow of the moor she perceived that she had already gone as far as it would be wise to go with the sun so low upon the purple hills in the distance. She was nearer now to Usselby Hall than she was to Yarrell Croft. What if she were to meet George Kirkoswald? She had heard that he might go out for awhile any day now, if he chose. She had no particular wish to meet him, neither had she any dread of meeting him. A woman who is mistress of the elusive can hold her own under any circumstances.

She gave a little sigh as she gathered up some folds of her dress and turned to go. Even an encounter with Kirkoswald might have been better than this dreary solitude.

Going back is always dreary when you are alone. Miss Richmond lingered a moment. The little, rough heathery valley, with the gray boulders all down its sides, seeming as if they must topple over, was close at her left. The low sun caught the upper edge of it, making a margin of gold. Something there, just between the gold and the purple-brown, arrested her, something that was lying half across one of the whitest and smallest of the rough scarred stones.

It was a figure—certainly it was a dark figure that was lying so stirlessly there.

It was not far away, and she saw plainly that it was none other than Noel Bartholomew, who had fallen asleep in the still sunshine of the Sunday afternoon. So it was that she smiled; wondering in what seemly and graceful and delicate way she might awaken him.

Already she was moving toward him with a sweet, soft smile on her curved lips, a faint blush on her cheek, and a glad subdued light in her beautiful eyes. Perhaps the mere rustle of her silken folds upon the withered heather would suffice to awaken him from his sleep.

She came nearer, near enough to see the placid, easeful look that was almost a smile upon the face of the sleeping man. The

‘I need say no more of that time. I need not tell you that he was kind, and gentle, and honourable, and silent.

‘When I heard of his wife’s death I thanked Heaven. Then it seemed to me that I might believe in a special Providence, a Providence that yet meant good towards me.

‘And once again I thanked Heaven: it was when Noel Bartholomew came back to Murk-Marishes. I had been growing old, and my looks had begun to fade. In one week I grew young again, and, let me say it, more beautiful than I had ever been. A woman does not see when she is beautiful; she feels it. I felt myself growing beautiful again, and I felt myself capable of growing good.

‘But the first time I met Noel Bartholomew—it was in his own house—my heart sank swiftly. He had loved, and his love was not dead. It would never die.

‘And my love would never die.

‘Instead of dying, it began to live as it had never lived before. It had always been a strong love; now it grew all at once to be a passionate love, or rather a passionate pain, a passionate suffering. . . . You will wonder why it was so. You will ask yourself what there was about Noel Bartholomew to win the affection of such a one as I am. If you asked me I could not answer you. If I said it was his goodness, you would smile. If I said it was his kindness, you would not understand. No man ever does understand, and yet it is the one thing that a woman can never resist—simple, thoughtful, unwearied, and unfailing kindness.

‘His kindness to me was only a suggestion of what it might have been if he had loved me. That was where the pain was; the suggestion was so sweet, so haunting, so discontenting. . . . And yet I would rather have had his unkindness than the kindness of any man I have ever known.

‘And every time I saw him afresh the pain grew, and the trouble grew, and my love grew; it grew to recklessness. More than once I all but told him of my love. I did tell him, only just not so directly that he had to refuse it in so many words. And yet he did refuse it, and he stung me, maddened me by his coldness, his calmness, his gentle, imperturbable apathy. Oh! how it stung me, when I was so willing to give up all for him! If

you will let me tell you all, then I will go away. I will never see you any more. I will never vex you any more.'

Then she waited, listened ; but the only answer was the cry of a solitary plover far off across the moor.

As she waited she read the superscription on the letter, and she recognised Mr. Montacute's handwriting. She herself had received a letter exactly similar in appearance only the evening before. And Diana Richmond recognised more than the lawyer's handwriting. . . . She knelt there as a man might kneel by the friend he had slain by an ill-calculated blow in a moment of sudden anger. She had not the excuse of anger, but the excuse of love. She uttered no cry. She was struck far beyond the display of passionate emotion.

And still the sun went on sinking ; it was behind the hilltop now, and darkness was coming up from the dark, lone sea. She must do something. 'What could she do?' she asked herself, feeling yet no stir of terror though she was alone there, on Langbarough Moor, with one who might not stir nor speak.

At last she touched the hand—the hand near to her that held the dead daisy, and it was a very terrible thing to touch.

When she rose to her feet she reeled as with a sudden faintness, but the light breeze came with the effect of an ice-cold wind ; and she shuddered, and the faintness passed.

She must leave him—leave him lying there, and she must go to Usselby. She was nearer to George Kirkoswald's home than to her own, and some other unrecognised reasonings, or rather instincts, influenced her to this decision. She would go there, and then—what would happen then ? . . . Miss Richmond could see no farther at that moment.

She stood awhile with her face buried in her hands, and presently with a great effort she stooped and kissed the broad forehead from which the wind was lifting the gray hair. Then she took the little withered daisy with its limp stalk, hiding it in her dress as she turned and fled. And as she went the plover cried again upon the moorland, and the wailing, plaintive note followed her like the cry of some dark, accusing spirit whose voice would be in her ears for evermore.

All the way, by whin-brake and briar-brake, and down by the

'Caring so much as he did care for his daughter, I felt certain that, for her sake, he would come, that he would desire to know all the truth as to that long-past engagement. I did not dream that you would keep silence, or that the stupid world would keep silence. But I have noted that the world's silences are often as malignant in their results as its wildest speech.

'All the summer I watched for his coming ; but he never came. I learnt afterward that he had even taken advantage of the few days I was absent to come over and take such sketches as were needful for the pictures Cecil had asked him to paint.

'From the first I was glad about those pictures.

'I am telling you all—I am telling you the worst ; I am telling you that I am a woman capable of deliberate evil-will ; I may even say that I believe there is in me an innate tendency to wrongdoing rather than to right ; but am I *all* evil ? . . . Say that I am not. I have known hours of inward strife, hours of relenting, hours when I have been afraid of myself, aghast at unexpected results. . . . Tell me that I am not so evil all through, so utterly beyond hope, as I seem to myself to be !'

Miss Richmond paused, and she looked into George Kirkoswald's face ; but her sudden question found him unprepared. He was dismayed and perplexed ; and yet his dismay was half pity, half compassion. He did not speak ; but Miss Richmond saw the look on his face, and went on again.

'Yes, I was glad from the first moment about those commissions,' she said. 'A whole series of suggestions hung about the idea that he was doing something that must bring us into contact of some kind ; the kind might be made to depend on my will—or so I thought. But I never decided on any particular course ; I let matters drift—only giving them a little turn this way or that when the chance came. But nothing happened as I expected it would happen.

'You know that I destroyed Mr. Bartholomew's letters to Cecil ? . . . No ? . . . Well, I did. There were three of them. I had the same motive. It was not to keep Noel Bartholomew in suspense, but to bring him to Yarrell—to bring him there alone. He never came.

'The silence then was terrible. He was silent, and you were

sister, no wife or daughter, for your ministering angel, does not tempt you to linger in a state of which the chief delight is the delight of being ministered to. Still, even under these conditions, convalescence is not without its satisfactions.

That bright, calm Sunday had certainly seemed to George Kirkoswald to be—

'One of those heavenly days that cannot die.'

Though he had not been out of doors, he had sat by windows open to the pine-woods, and the Marishes, and the dark, lone, blue sea, where the white sails were flitting. Seagulls had come up, flapping by on heavy wing, resting in great flocks upon the newly-ploughed lands; busy sparrows were darting about the gardens with swift unanimous whirr; the white-edged holly-trees shone out against the ancient yews; the first soft, sweet thrush note came up from the boughs of the mulberry-tree, and at times a tiny wren piped as he flew from shrub to shrub on the green terraces.

To be able to lie quite still, listening, thinking, dreaming, yielding to the influence of the day and the hour, is to attain one of the highest peaks of earthly felicity. Wordsworth attained it, and, what is more, he kept it, lived in it. That is the secret of his charm for us who are hurrying through the burden and heat of the day, and to whom the primrose by the river's brim is not even a yellow primrose, but the *cachet* of a great political party.

All the forenoon George had tried to read; in the afternoon he had permitted himself to write a letter—the first letter he had written to Genevieve Bartholomew.

For days past the yearning to write, to pour out all that he had to say, had been growing with him. He told himself that it would be both better and easier to write than to wait and speak face to face. He could express himself, his love, his sorrow, his hope, more fully if he might put them all on paper; and he was just in the mood to do it now. His illness had been like a sharp dividing line in his life. On the one side there were all the old mistakes, the old sufferings and emptinesses. The one good thing on that other side was the day in Birkrigg Gill; and the influence of that day was above and outside the line that severed

have his hate. Was I passing on to hatred myself? or is perverted love a worse thing than hatred? . . . Indifference I could not know, nor forgetfulness.

‘At any moment, from first to last, one word from him, and I had fallen at his feet in regret, in remorse, in passionate desire to atone for all I had done.

‘And now all possibility of atonement is gone.

‘Have you any pity left for me? Can you think of yesterday, of the fate that drew me, half against my will, from my own drawing-room to the top of Langbarugh Moor, drew me there, face to face with the man I had loved so passionately, and who lay there with his death-warrant in his hand so peacefully—can you think of it, and not pity me, knowing that I know that it was my own hand that signed the deed?

‘And yet I do not want your pity; I did not come here to ask for that. I came to disburden myself of all this, to see if I might breathe more freely when I had spoken. . . . No, I do not want your pity. . . . I want nothing you can give. . . . Yet you might forgive me—you might forgive me the harm I have done to you. . . . To feel that you forgave me would ease my mind a little—it would ease me from this pain, and wretchedness, and racking misery a little.’

Miss Richmond had spoken with calmness, and yet her voice had betrayed more of the reality of her suffering than her words had done. She sat there now, twining her hands together with a grasp and movement that was almost convulsive. No doubt of the depth of her misery entered George’s brain for a moment. His thought was otherwise engaged, as it could not fail to be; indeed, he was so greatly bewildered that he could hardly free himself to declare that forgiveness which was asked of him.

‘Of course,’ he replied, ‘of course, if it is needful for me to say in so many words that I forgive you any pain you may have caused me, I will say it; and I may add that I can say it all the more readily and truly, because since you have spoken so plainly I cannot but understand. If you had not spoken, I confess that comprehension would have been difficult. All through I have been puzzled, pained; and now I am pained for you; but what can I say to comfort you?’

and drawing her into the house. 'What has happened? Someone is ill. Come in here—into my study. You are ill yourself. Pray come in!'

For a moment Diana only looked into his face with eyes set in terror, and pallid lips that tried to speak, and could not. Her features were distorted, her hair was dropping over her dress, her hands were clasped tightly together. Words came at last, broken, imploring, half-coherent words.

'Send them,' she said. 'Send your people to the moor. . . . You will let them bring him here? . . . You will let them bring him to your house?'

'Is it your brother?' George said, placing her in a chair, and standing by her, ready to soothe and support her if he might. 'It is Cecil? Is he ill? Whereabouts on the moor is he? But I will go myself, and you shall stay here. Tell me, if you can, exactly where he is?'

'It is not Cecil,' Miss Richmond said, with increase of consciousness, increase of agony in her expression. 'It is not Cecil. . . . I could wish that it were. . . . It is—it is Noel Bartholomew. It is he. And he is dead. He is lying there alone. And he is dead!'

No response was made. A minute or two later George Kirkoswald and Charlock went hurrying up to the top of Langbarugh Moor in the still evening together. The young crescent moon was hanging in the clear sky; the plovers were still wailing upon the upland. There was no other sound, only the wailing of the plovers.

CHAPTER LXV.

'EXPECTING STILL HIS ADVENT HOME.'

'For now her father's chimney glows
In expectation of a guest;
And thinking "this will please him best,"
She takes a riband or a rose.'

TENNYSON.

THE people whose business and gladness it has been to help in the progress of humanity by means of things written, have said

our own control, and take on a separate existence, and how far our responsibility may extend we cannot tell. We may blame ourselves for things of which the very angels hold us innocent. Where we know we are not innocent, we need not, thank Heaven! sink to despair. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, and no spirit was ever yet broken by the weight of what was counted as but venial sin. A great fall, or what seems such to us, is very often the beginning of any real spiritual rising.'

An almost imperceptible light moved like a flash across Miss Richmond's face as George Kirkoswald said the last sentence.

'You think that?' she said. 'You can say that though you are thinking of me?'

'Yes,' George replied, looking up with the consciousness of the weight of the moment in his eyes. 'Yes, I can say that. Will you let me say more—will you let me say that I think your whole nature has needed some such powerful and determining influence as this? Hitherto there has been no crisis in your life, nothing to awaken, to test your powers, nothing to bring you face to face with the stern realities of existence. . . . Your experience has been all of one kind, and therefore it is all the more likely that this sudden and trying calamity will, in the end, make for your peace.'

Miss Richmond sat in silence for another minute or two; then she rose to her feet, and stood looking out with eyes that were slowly filling with tears toward the spot where the dark figure had lain but yesterday.

'Thank you,' she said at last, holding out her hand as she spoke. 'Thank you. . . . If it all comes back again—if it is more than I can bear, will you let me write?'

'I shall be glad if you will write,' George replied, remembering all the loneliness and desolateness of her life. 'If you will let me, I will still be glad to be your friend so long as you may need my friendliness.'

They parted then, Miss Richmond preferring to walk back over the moor alone. All the way the hot tears were dropping over her face, all the way the soothing words were ringing through her brain, all the way that seed-germ of higher hope was falling more deeply into the ground prepared for it. As yet it was no more than that, a tiny germ that might grow, and unfold, and make for good.

Many a sudden-seeming shock has found us half prepared, not knowing how we were prepared. The unintelligible and invisible makes itself intelligible by moments at a time; so, when we know it not, it attests itself to us, and we feel for ever afterward that the actual, as we see it and know it, is not a fixed quantity; and the circumscribing lines of material knowledge come to be perplexingly uncertain.

It is when we are thus weighed upon by an impending event that we make such pathetically unconscious efforts to ignore its preponderance. The little acts of life are done more carefully, as if to make sure they matter much. A woman finds herself singing a light-hearted little song unawares, or humming over a favourite waltz; a man goes about whistling; or he chooses a better cigar, and smokes it with attention to his enjoyment. We have all of us tried to cheat ourselves so on occasion.

Genevieve had time and opportunity for many little self-deceptions. It was Keturah's 'Sunday out'; and, as usual, she had stayed to tea, so that Genevieve was quite alone from the middle of the afternoon—alone, but not till after dark in any loneliness. Then it was that she began to murmur little tunes softly, and to walk up and down the tiny room from the door to the window listeningly. Her father would be quite aware that she was alone, with no human being within half a mile of the cottage.

When the sun had really gone down, and the silver moon was up, gusts of wind began to come round the house; and they came rather wildly, and there was a chilliness in the air which was sufficient excuse for piling up the pine-knots till they blazed in the cheeriest fashion they knew of. Prince Camaralzaman woke up to Genevieve's singing, and joined in with a sleepy chirp or two; the kettle was joining in with a will. The little tea-table was still by the armchair, with the cup and saucer of real crown-Derby upon the tray. This had been Miss Craven's gift to Mr. Bartholomew on his birthday, and it had been given with the express desire that it should not be 'kept to look at.'

As a matter of course, all causes possible and impossible that might underlie her father's long absence entered into Genevieve's brain as she paced the little room in her growing loneliness. The one great dread that seemed to be taking root was the dread that

The face of Noel Bartholomew needed no adventitious aid. It was as a sculptor's dream of all that might be grand or great in humanity.

It has been said that it is not till after death that the real character of a man is made visible in the countenance—not till that low strife which makes the mind little for the moment is over. All that has been best in a man is confirmed, attested; all that has been less than the best is done away.

When Death has laid 'his sovereign, soothing hand' upon the features, he leaves there a royal serenity of aspect. It is as if he said, 'Though you knew it not, this man was noble, and had a noble power. All that life darkened, I, Death, make visible to your eyes.'

Not yet had Genevieve Bartholomew shed any tear. In this first moment she shed none. This seemed no place for tears. Her first thought was, 'Is this my father? Can he look so?'

For some time she stood there with clasped hands and bowed head, not thinking, not praying, only looking into that still, and calm, and noble face.

The scent of the white violets that were strewn about the pillow, of the great rich spires of white hyacinth that were everywhere, came to her like part of that which filled the room, that grand, great Presence that was yet beautiful, that was wholly peaceful.

Outside in the sunny air the birds were chirping and singing; that was the only sound, and it was the sound that the sleeping man had loved above all others—the sound that more than any had made him to be 'in love with easeful Death.' It was as if she could still hear him saying :

'Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain.'

Even so he had ceased to be, not upon the dark midnight, but upon the still, sunny Sunday morning; at a time and in a place where one lower than he might have been moved to desire to cease to be.

It was not till the thought came to her that she might not remain there much longer that any chord of grief was struck. She knelt again then, kneeling so that she could see the face. 'Must

'You shall sit there,' Genevieve said to the Canon moving the chair forward in nervous unconsciousness. 'And tell me what has brought you to Netherbank on Sunday evening during service time—tell me quickly, please.'

She spoke strangely, trying to speak quietly, trying to speak lightly. Her lips quivered, not knowing whether they should smile or no.

'It is a little out of the usual order of things, is it not?' said the Canon, taking her two hands in his. She had knelt down by his side, and was resting with one elbow on the broad arm of the chair. Kneeling so, she could look into the old man's face, and try to read all that he might hesitate to speak. Assuredly he had that to say that might make him hesitate.

'It is a little out of the usual order of things,' he said, keeping the girl's hands in his, and looking outwards, beyond the boundary of anything he saw. My new curate, Mr. Summerhayes, is taking the evening service entirely, and that is not usual. I happened to have stayed at home, and that is not usual. Then there came a visitor to the Rectory, and the visitor was Mr. Kirkoswald. . . . It has all been unusual.'

'Mr. Kirkoswald!' exclaimed Genevieve, for the moment surprised out of all fear. 'He is able to go out?'

'He has been out this evening for the first time.'

'Why should he have chosen to go out in the evening?' the girl asked, conscious again of hidden dread, and some bewilderment.

'He did not choose, dear. He went on an errand of mercy.'

Then, for the first time, the Canon looked into Genevieve's eyes, while she looked into his, reading there nothing to put an end to fear.

There was a distinct and impressive pause. The flames of the fire went up with a rhythmical beating; the clock ticked audibly, the Canon's grasp tightened upon the girl's white hands.

'And that errand of mercy concerned me?' she said at last, turning her beautiful dark eyes, and her pale, finely-cut face toward the old man again.

'Yes, my child,' he said, feeling and knowing that he need dread no scene; that the woman who knelt at his feet was one

When all was over, when the dropping mould had fallen upon the coffin-lid, surely the most agonizing sound this earth can have for human ears, then again Sorrow would have her own wild will and way; and Canon Gabriel was too wise to try to stop the flowing of tears so natural, so certain to end in a more patient peacefulness. For awhile his guest did as she would. If she preferred to be alone he understood without a word; if she cared to go to him in his study, then she knew that he was glad to have her there. So two days went by in a quiet that was as precious as it was needful.

On the third day there came a sound to break the quiet. The big gates at the bottom of the avenue were thrown open; a carriage with a pair of horses dashed in rather grandly, and in a very few minutes Canon Gabriel came to prepare Genevieve for a visit.

'Can you see a friend, dear?' the old man asked. 'A friend who has come a long way to see you. . . . She only got my letter yesterday morning.'

'It is Mrs. Winterford!' Genevieve said, speaking with more of life and eagerness than she had shown about anything yet; and the next moment a little shy, timid, white-haired lady was shown in, her black silk dress rustling, her black beads and fringes glittering and trembling as she rushed forward to be folded in Genevieve's fervid embrace.

'My child!' she exclaimed, 'my own child whom God has given me twice over!' That was all that could be said in that first moment. Tears silenced the words that might have been.

Presently the carriage, which had been hired at Market Studley, was sent round to the Richmond Arms; and rooms were taken there for Mrs. Winterford and her maid for one night. The little lady meant to do things very quickly, wisely thinking that, since they must be painful things, the sooner the pain was overgot the better. She was not long in perceiving that Genevieve had had no plans, and thought of none; so that her own did not meet with prepared opposition. She spoke from the beginning as if no opposition were possible or likely; and, indeed, what opposition could have been made? If Genevieve had thought of the matter at all, she would have said to herself, 'I have no home,

the senses and changed the voice. 'I have not misunderstood ; my father is . . .'

'Your father has fallen asleep, my child.'

And even as the old man spoke, the words that Noel Bartholomew had used only the night before came as if she heard them again :

'Remember your wish, dear, when you know that I am sleeping better.'

Had he known? Had he felt that such great weariness as his, weariness of life, of work, of pain, of disappointment—had he felt that such weariness was significant of coming rest? Even as she asked herself the question she knew that he had felt it; that he had known it long. He had prepared himself for this quiet falling asleep.

She did not ask more questions; but Canon Gabriel wisely thought that it would be better to tell her then all that there was to be told; then, while her pain was greater than her sorrow; then, before sensitiveness to the sound of her father's name, to the mention of aught connected with him, had come upon her, as so surely it would come.

She listened very patiently while the Canon told his tale, heightening the halo of quiet spiritual beauty that was about it. She spoke of her own last sight of her father, of how she had watched him going up to the moor, gliding away out of the shadow into the full light of the morning sun. She had known nothing of the letter that had been in his hand. The Canon told her of it, and she felt its significance as a factor in the thing that had happened. None could know as she knew how her father had shrunk from all save the gentlest and kindest human intercourse; how he had suffered from even the unthinking, and how any signs of evil will had preyed upon him 'like night-fires on a heath.' None could know as she knew; yet both Canon Gabriel and George Kirkoswald had partly perceived the meaning and weight of that one small incident. The letter was in Kirkoswald's hands now, and it was still unopened, the Canon told her.

'Then it shall remain unopened,' she replied. 'Since he never knew what it contained, I will never know. It shall not be opened; and *they* shall know that it was never opened.'

have come too quickly one after another to permit of any real and open clearing up of things. Now, of course, it is impossible that there can be anything definite said for some time to come.'

'You think the affection is mutual?' the little lady asked.

'Of that I am certain,' was the reply, and many thoughts were behind the old man's words as he spoke. 'I am quite certain that it is mutual; and I am quite certain that on both sides it is very great. Mr. Kirkoswald has been ill, but he is better now; and since Genevieve has been here he has come down from Usselby each morning and each evening to make inquiries. He will come again to-night; and I must see him for a moment. . . . It will be a painful moment if I must tell him that Genevieve is leaving us to-morrow.'

'I think she would not wish to see him just now,' Mrs. Winterford said, speaking timidly, as if not quite sure.

'Most certainly she would not,' the Canon said decisively. 'She probably could not. I have not mentioned his name to her at all. . . . And he is very good, patient with a deep, strong patience that touches me greatly.'

* * * * *

The events of the past few days had told more considerably upon George Kirkoswald's newly-recovered strength than he was ready to admit; but admission was forced upon him at last. Dr. Armitage, meeting him on his way down from Usselby to the Rectory that same evening, insisted upon his going back again; and the next morning found him, to say the least of it, willing to rest. He would go down to Thurkeld Abbas when evening came again.

It was a very wild evening—wild and cold and strange. All day the sky had been swept by great gloomy masses of cloud; the temperature had gone down rapidly; the wind had come in fitful gusts. Then it had ceased, and a thick, damp, chilling snow-fog had crept up from the north-east, covering all the land. It hung like a great yellow pall as George went down from Usselby in the late afternoon. He could not see the church-tower: the tops of the houses disclosed themselves to him slowly, one by one, as he rode up the village street. He left his horse at the Richmond Arms this evening, which he had not done before. He hardly

sudden-seeming event as this for him. It is more than probable that he had had a sleepless night; he went out without having tasted food of any kind; and he climbed to the last height of Langbarugh Moor. What so certain as exhaustion? What so likely as consequent sudden failure of vitality? . . . And what so painful to him now as to know that you are entertaining a wrong- and unjust impression; to perceive, as he may indeed perceive, that the beauty, the stillness, the goodness that was about him on that sunny hilltop to the last moment, is all unnoted by you; that you are not thankful that he had no pain or fear; that he was, and, in a moment, was not, for God took him? How can we know what angels came and ministered to him there, closing his eyes in peace, and filling his spirit with peace, and bearing him away to be for ever in that peace that passeth all understanding? And is all this nothing to you, my child? Can you turn from it and see only a dark, embittering consequence of human error and mistake? At the worst it has been mistake. And have you no pity for those who made it? If they should, unfortunately and unhappily, take the same view that you are taking, does not your heart burn within you even now to go and comfort them? Do you not yearn to make them see how all their error and perversity and want of charity has been changed in the crucible of God's lovingkindness till it has turned to peace and rest and perfect spiritual beauty? . . . Do not think that I under-estimate the pain of parting. I, who have said so many farewells, am no likely to do that. But it is not all pain, dear; and it is none of it bitterness; even to you this should not, it must not, be bitterness.'

Genevieve listened, still with that look of something that was almost stupor on her face: it seemed to be deepening there. She kissed the old man's hand when he had spoken, then she looked into his eyes again.

'I will try to be good,' she said simply. 'I will try to be very good; and I will remember all that you have said. . . . But you will not leave me, Canon Gabriel? . . . You will not leave me here? . . . You will take me to Usselby? . . . You will let me see him—you will let me sit beside him to-night?'

'I will certainly not leave you here, my child,' the Canon said. 'And for the rest, I have arranged it all with Mr. Kirkoswald. I

'I shall see her before long,' said George resolutely, rising to his feet as he spoke, and smoothing out the contractions that had gathered about his forehead. He could perceive already that this thing that was causing him such great and unexpected disappointment was the best thing possible for her he loved. Love is worth nothing that cannot acquiesce in the good of the one beloved, even though that good lie outside of him and all his effort, all his cognizance.

Yet it was a lonely going back for him. He felt that he had never been glad enough that Genevieve had been so near. He could not picture her in that new and unknown home, with that new and unknown friend whose love and opportunities for showing love seemed to defraud him somewhat. He would have to live in the future while the slow days were passing now; but he could not look cheerfully into the days to be with that chill piercing gust coming round him in the darkness, dashing the snow into his face, and half-blinding him. That brief bright February spring which comes so often in this strange climate of ours was at an end. It had given place to that second winter which, as a rule, proves to be a worse winter than the first.

CHAPTER LXIX.

THE DRIFTING SNOW UPON LANGBARUGH MOOR.

'Yet turn again, thou faire damselle,
And greete thy queene from mee;
When bale is at hiest, boote is nyest,
Now helpe enoughe may bee.'

The Ballad of Sir Aldingar.

ALL the year that cry that was for ever upon old Joseph Craven's lips had no meaning—none but that tragic meaning which was connected with it when it first broke from his lips. Now once more it came mournfully and appositely.

'The snaw's allus driftin' ower Langbarugh Moor!'

For three days it had been drifting. The land lay white and still under a lowering, threatening snow-cloud of dark indigo blue.

above them, gone beyond all touch and reach of hers for evermore.

What wonder that deep down in her heart there should be the cry :

'All Thy waves and storms are gone over me. The waters compass me about, even to the soul ; the depth is closed upon me ; the weeds are wrapped about my head !'

CHAPTER LVII.

'LADY, YOU UTTER MADNESS, AND NOT SORROW.'

'Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.'

TENNYSON.

THERE is in this north country of ours a proverb which says that 'A bad tale gangs faster afoot than a good tale gangs a-horseback.' The sorrowful news of Noel Bartholomew's death must have been conveyed by all swift means possible. By nine o'clock on Monday morning it was everywhere.

Now that he was gone where unkindness might pain him nevermore, nothing save kind words were said.

All that had been counted so inadequate in him was praised as the natural simplicity and humility of genius in all ages. His want of manner became genuine unaffectedness ; his occasional brusqueness of speech was recognised as manful honesty ; his unsociableness was admitted to be the natural love of reclusive ways of living common to all workers or thinkers to whom work and thought are realities of life. One half of that sacred wine of charity and sympathy which was poured out to the memory of the dead man would have made his life dear to him—so dear that he had desired to live on, to work on.

'Not go to heaven, but linger here,
Here on my earth, earth's every man my friend.'

Did he hear now ? Did he know ?

There were people who would have given much to see him back

little milk that the cows gave was blue and thin, and that it had no cream to speak of. It was only in keeping with all the rest. The very fowls were not laying. For weeks past there had been no farm produce of any kind to be taken to Thurkeld Abbas, to exchange for groceries or for animal food. For over a week now the daily dinner for Miss Craven, her father and mother, and the one farm lad, had consisted mainly of a pigeon or two shot by Hanson as they clustered together on the snow-covered remains of the last haystack.

Mr. Crudas was not unaware of this state of things; he was mindful to keep himself as much alive to it as was possible. Dorothy told him nothing that she could help telling; but, as he was in the habit of saying to himself, 'If I *is* a bit deäf, I isn't blind yet;' and, indeed, though love may blind the eyes, as it is said to do, assuredly it does but give double seeing power to the heart.

Ishmael Crudas saw a great deal more than he wished to see, and the sight made his heart ache more than Miss Craven imagined. And she had not permitted him to speak of his heart-ache of late. Some time ago she had forbidden all protestation. He might come to the house if he chose, or he might choose not to come; but if he came he must be silent about the one wish and desire that was left to him.

He had not been obedient. The thing was always present with him, and it could not be but that it should declare its continued existence in one way or another. If he might not plead openly, he could take care that no chance of inserting a hint was ever lost. He did not mind Dorothy's glances. Another man might have found them deterrent and forbidding, but Mr. Crudas knew her well enough and loved her well enough to dare to brave any number of them. To him they were but a proof that he was not indifferent to her.

He had not been up at Hunsgarth Haggs since the snowstorm set in. The last time Miss Craven had seen him had been in the churchyard at Thurkeld Abbas on the day when Noel Bartholomew had been laid there to rest. Their eyes had met then through tears and sorrow; and it was but natural that each should see on the face of the other an expression of sympathetic kindness that was not too common there.

the white face before him had a strangely stricken look. It was not difficult to understand. For a woman who had so seldom seen death in any form the shock of yesterday must have been very terrible—all the more terrible because of her connection with the events of the past few weeks. He remembered; yet he felt only pity, and only pity was in his look.

'I was coming to you,' she said, speaking as if her voice had been pitched in some other key since he heard it last; changed to something natural, yet in a sense unnatural, because sincere and true, and tuned to accord with the realities of pain. 'I was coming to you,' she said; 'not to your house—not there; but near it. I wanted to see you. . . . I could not have slept again if I had not seen you.'

'I need hardly say that if there is anything I can do you may command me,' George replied. One of his first and strongest instincts was the instinct that prompted him always to help any woman who might be in need of help. It was as natural to him as to breathe. The fact that between Diana Richmond and himself there had been relations not of the pleasantest did but make him more consciously anxious to be of use to her if he might. Therefore it was that he said so sincerely, 'You may command me. . . . Cecil, I know, is not at home.'

'No, and if he were it would not matter,' Diana replied. 'Cecil cannot help me. . . . No one can help me.'

'If you are in trouble, and I fear you are,' George replied, turning to look into her face again, and speaking with that authoritative kindness that sits upon some men so naturally, 'perhaps it would comfort you, do you some good, even to speak of it. . . . Don't think I am curious or inquisitive.'

'I think nothing of that kind,' interposed Diana. 'I must speak of it. I must speak of it all, or go mad. This is no exaggeration. My brain has reeled, my consciousness has been shaken; more than once since last night I have been so near the border-land of madness that I have taken a book and tried to read to see if I could still understand the speech and meaning of sane men. . . . I know something of these things—of monomania. It has been in the family for generations—the tendency to dwell upon one idea till no other was possible. . . . I do not say this to excuse

down from the dresser to the door ; still kept on uttering the words that seemed filled afresh with sad meanings.

At last, quite suddenly, the old man stopped. He was close to the window.

‘Whisht!’ he said, in a strange, awestruck whisper. ‘Whisht, Dolly! . . . What’s he singin’ for? What’s he singin’ oot there for, where the snaw’s driftin’? It’s allus driftin’ ower Langbarugh Moor!’

Dorothy Craven was not a weak woman, not impressionable, yet she felt that the colour fled from her face. It was her father’s strange manner that moved her more than aught he said.

‘Who’s singing?’ she said, putting her knitting down, and going up to her father as he stood there in the attitude of one who listens intently.

‘Wheä’s singin’?’ the old man said, with a smile, ‘Whya lissen tiv her! She pretends she disn’t knaw Ishmal Crudds’s voice! . . . Hearken, then! hearken! Wheä is’t ’at sings yon sang?—

“‘It’s oh, I’m sick, I’m very sick,
An’ it’s a’ for Barbara Allen.”’

For a moment Dorothy felt faint, yet unconsciously she was impelled to listen herself. But she could hear no sound save the sound of the wuthering wind, and the driving snow, and the hissing that was upon the wide hearthstone.

Doubtless this was a new fancy of her father’s weakened brain ; yet she knew that he was not given to new fancies, and there was that in his manner which compelled more than her attention.

‘He’s oot yonder,’ the old man went on, with a new keen sparkle in his faded eyes, and a small spot of burning colour coming into either cheek. ‘Ishmal’s oot yonder, ower by Haverah Mere. . . . But what’s he singin’ for? what sud he staäy there singin’ i’ th’ driftin’ snaw for—the snaw that drifts for ever upon Langbarugh Moor?’

With a quiver on her lip Dorothy went out to the door that opened upon the stackyard. The snow was falling less heavily ; there was a lurid gleam of light up over the edge of the white moorland. But the only sound she heard was the sound of the milk streaming into Hanson’s pail in the cow-house close at hand,

little grassy knoll from which *he* had plucked the pink-tipped daisy. Miss Richmond kept the withered daisy.

She sat down at some distance from the stone, but she could see it as she sat, and her eyes were drawn there half against her will, while George led his horse a few yards away and fastened the bridle to the bough of a dead thorn-tree. Then he came back and sat down on the heather opposite to where Diana Richmond was sitting.

The same stricken look was on her face when she began speaking again, the same intense earnestness, and in her words there was the same grave directness.

'You are very good,' she said, looking into George's face. 'I have always known that, always felt it; sometimes I have hated you for it. Now I am glad of it, since it makes you patient, and sympathetic, and forgiving. Just now you are dreading to hear what I have to say, and yet you are sitting there as if there were nothing you desired so much as to hear me begin at the beginning of my life, and tell you every trivial and hateful detail of it all on to the end. . . . The end was yesterday.

'I will only go back to the beginning of that end, but that will take me back over one-and-twenty years, back to the time when I was a wilful, unthinking, yet intensely-loving woman of seventeen. I had never loved till then; I have never loved since. Plays and novels count it a virtue in a woman that she never loves but once, and is true to one love for her whole long lifetime. I may claim credit, then, for one virtue. But I was true against my will. I would have loved you if I could. But though Noel Bartholomew was married, and though I never saw him, I never forgot him, I never ceased to care for him, and to care passionately. And somehow I had always the feeling that my chance of winning him was not ended.

'He had never loved me, never cared for me, and I have thought sometimes that it was his indifference that drew me to love him so wildly, so madly. . . . Once—it was before I knew that he was engaged to Clarice Brook—I told him here, on this very moor, that if I could not have his love I should die. I had no shame when I said it, and for that I have had no shame since. . . . If I had been a weak woman instead of a strong one, I should assuredly have died.

edge of the basin that enclosed it on three sides. It was frozen ; the snow was lying smoothly upon it, higher at one end than the other, apparently, but she could not see quite across to the other side. And yet it was not a dark night. Though it was long past the hour of sunset, and the moon had not yet risen, a light seemed to strike upward from the great unlevel plain of snow.

Hanson was by her side, wondering, breathless, half angry, wholly chilled. What could be his mistress's motive for such a wild vagary as this? He could only hope from the bottom of his heart that compensation would be made to him in the shape of supper.

Miss Craven had stopped on the northern edge of the mere. There was no sound, no sign. If there had been any footmarks it was too dark to discern them.

Should she cry aloud? Should she make known her presence there, so that if any wanderer were fallen into that sleep which is the sleep of death he might be roused to effort? Her lips parted to make some sound, but none came. She was nerveless, powerless. If she had had any hope it had lost its spring.

So she stood on the wild, snow-covered moorland. The wind was beginning to rise again ; her shawl fluttered past her face. She was growing cold and chill since her purpose had begun to fail.

Then suddenly, as she stood there, a shrill sound broke upon the night ; it seemed close at hand in the darkness when it began. Dorothy turned, stifling a sob that arose, lest it should prevent her hearing. Whence exactly did it come? It seemed farther away already. She clasped her hands passionately together as she stood with the snowflakes drifting into her face. In her ears the words were shrilling :

'She hadna gane a mile but twa
When she heard the deid-bell ringin',
And every jow the deid-bel' gied,
It cried, "Wae to Barbara Allan."

'Wae, indeed !' she said to herself, as she went flying over the frozen snow. There was no sound now to guide her. For some minutes she went wandering on in the gusty darkness, now stopping for a moment, now stumbling, and rising again and

he had asked me, I would have gone to live under that thatched roof, and never once have hesitated to do it. And yet he would not even stoop to take anything I had to offer. He could not, and I saw that he could not, and I grew more utterly reckless with every week that went by.

'There are certain days that stand out above the other days. There was the day the stone was laid in Soulsgrif Bight. I went down all gentleness and love and new humility, and filled with new yearnings. When I saw him there among the crowd my heart almost stood still. For a moment I was afraid of him coming to me, afraid to hear his voice, afraid to touch his hand. But he did not come; he remained standing aloof, talking to farm-folks and to fisher-folks, and for a long time he was as if I had not been there. Then he passed me, raising his hat as he passed, and sending me a cold glance that went through me like a shiver; and before I was aware of it, all my love and gentleness was turned to a wild desire to be revenged, to give pain, to have satisfaction of some kind. It was his coldness, his aloofness, that changed me. I had borne so much, I was bearing so much then.

'When I first heard that his daughter had won your love—it was long before that day when I met her and you in Birkgrigg Gill—I was glad—glad to the bottom of my heart. Now, I thought, he will be alone and lonely, now he will turn to me. But that hope died as soon as it was born, and the thought that others were happy all round me, while I was left so miserably unhappy, was a constant goad, driving me on to do things I had never intended to do. It was in that mood I wrote that letter to you, and in that mood I answered you on that day in Soulsgrif Bight.

'I had another motive for doing some of the things I have done; it has influenced me all through.

'It arose out of the idea that if Noel Bartholomew knew me better, he could not but learn to care for me more. I wanted to bring him to me, to hear him ask me for something, some explanation, some decision. If I could but bring him oftener to my side, let the errand be what it might, I should know how to make the most of it. If he asked a favour, I should know how to delay the granting of it; I should know how to yield at last, I should know how to make my yielding effective.

Eh ! but I was reeght then,' the old man said, with a new and beautiful light spreading over his worn face as they went in. 'Eh ! but I was reeght. 'Twas you that was singin' upon Langbarugh Moor, then ! I said you were singin' there, though the snaw was driftin'. . . T' snaw's allus driftin' ower Langbarugh Moor !'

CHAPTER LXX.

'FRESH AS THE WILDING HEDGE-ROSE CUP.'

'Thus, 'twas granted me
To know he loved me to the depth and height
Of such large natures, ever competent,
With grand horizons by the sea or land,
To love's grand sunrise. Small spheres hold small fires,
But he loved largely, as a man can love
Who, baffled in his love, dares live his life,
Accept the ends which God loves, for his own,
And lift a constant aspect.'

MRS. BROWNING : *Aurora Leigh*.

WILL it not be refreshing to find that the scene has changed with apparent rapidity—that Murk-Marishes with its barren and profitless farms, Langbarugh Moor with its drifting snows, Soulsgrif Bight with its homely fisher-folk, have all had to give place to the summer sunshine of the South, to civilization, to all the softness of a rich pastoral beauty ?

The house at Havilands stands in a hollow between wood-owned hills—round-topped gently-curving hills, disclosing no heaven crags, no masses of sterile sandstone. It is very truly already ^{as if} 'She clasped of nestling green for poets made.' For a stood with the snowflakes on a June day into the hollow, you see words were shrilling : athery, waving green which makes the early summer. Presently you perceive 'She hadna for chimneys, then a low red gable, When she ing between the trees discloses to, And every jow It cried, "Wassy harbour or two, a great fish-ster-lilies float, and where tall frozen snow. There was no sound sters. The sloping banks of minutes she went wandering on il, very hue. stopping for a moment, now stumblin'ning to think that he had

silent, and I did not know what was going on anywhere. I only believed that you were all together, all in sympathy, in felicity, and the thought made me feel as if the only end of my loneliness and misery would be fever and delirium.

'That was how I came to send the pictures back. Cecil did not know till afterward, and he was furious; but his fury availed nothing. Let me say it again, Cecil has been blameless all through, and he will suffer when he knows all. But his suffering will be nothing to mine—nothing. Mine can never end.

'You know all the rest; you know that on that day when you came to Yarrell to plead for your friend your plea was unsuccessful. You did not know the madness, the weariness, the disappointment that was consuming me. Had *he* come. . . . But I cannot think of it. . . . I dare not think of it. . . . He will come no more. That is all I know; he will come no more. I cannot realize it. I have to keep on saying it. . . . I shall never see him any more.

'On that same day, when I was in that same mood, his daughter came. You know what happened then?'

'Good God!' George impatiently exclaimed. 'Yes; I know. But do not let any thought of that distress you.'

'No; that will not distress me—not now,' Diana replied. 'I can never now have but one distress. . . . I only mention it to tell you that then again my motive was the same—to bring him to Yarrell, to hear him speak, and question, and plead in his quiet way. . . . Does it seem small, pitiful, inadequate? Then you do not know yet what love is, if aught seem small to you that can touch it in any way.

'It is pitiful, it is inadequate—it is worse than these in the light of yesterday. But remember that yesterday had not then dawned; remember that. I could not dream of yesterday.

'Can you even faintly understand now how I was driven on from point to point, goaded into fighting a battle over two paintings that were precious to me because they were his work? Did you really think that I cared for the price? The price of the two of them was less than the price of the last new dress I had from Paris.

'I came at last to feel that if I might not have his love I would

over it, and a table and two chairs inside it. On the table there was a piece of embroidered satin, and a tiny work-basket that he knew. He felt his face grow hot as he stood there ; and when he turned away his heart was beating. This nearness, this knowledge was almost enough for the moment.

He went on a little faster, nervously, unconsciously, and a sudden turn brought him to the side of the lakelet where the water-lilies were floating among the great, cool green leaves ; and the flags standing straight, and still, and double, being reflected downward as clearly as they stood upward. He had not seen before that there was an islet in the middle of the water, all covered with flowering shrubs and trailing branches, and rosy dropping blossoms. What was that gleaming line of blue and white half hidden among the scarlet honeysuckle ? Surely it was a little boat. . . . He went onward. The boat was drifting slowly, the oars dropped upon the rowlocks ; the crimson cushions pillowed a golden head half hidden by a straw hat with a black ribbon on it ; a white shawl was thrown over a heavy black dress. . . . It was Genevieve, and she slept. . . . The boat drifted onward toward an outlet that the water had at the farther end of the tiny lake. It was moving slowly, very slowly, brushing the yellow irises and the dropping woodbine. Still it moved : still Genevieve slept.

George had time to think a thousand things as he sauntered as noiselessly as might be over the turf-covered pathway ; turning now and then that he might keep near the drifting boat. There was a hedge of flowers between him and the lakelet, sometimes a tall hedge, sometimes a low one ; but he never lost sight of the golden head that lay sleeping upon the crimson cushions.

He remembered distinctly the moment when that fair, pure, impressive face had first struck upon his sight. The storm-wind of Soulsgrif Bight was playing rudely with the yellow rippling tresses ; the deep violet-gray eyes were lifted to his in anxious pain, the curved coral lips were parted to ask for any word of hope that he might have to give. . . . Surely it was but yesterday !

All that storm scene came back upon him—the dragging of the lifeboat overland, through the snow ; the difficulty of launching it from the sands of Soulsgrif ; the disabling stroke, the return ; the

‘What do prison chaplains say to men condemned to die?’

‘I cannot even imagine,’ George replied. ‘But it is certain that they must speak differently to different men, and it must be easier far to speak to such as acknowledge their wrong-doing, and are filled with sorrow for it. But the comparison was not mine, and I do not for a moment accept it. There is no analogy whatever. If we were to be punished for the *consequences* of all our errors, then were we indeed a miserable race. And as for this sad, final consequence we speak of, I can tell you, for your comfort, that he who is lying there in my house has known for some time past that the end might come even as suddenly as it has come. Dr. Armitage has told me that. I did not know it; would that I had! I would that I had but known it myself!’

‘Supposing that to be so—I do not doubt it—supposing his life to have been one of those that hang on a thread, yet see how the thread holds together in cases where there is peace, and freedom from anxiety and from all harassing things! . . . And Noel Bartholomew’s first attack happened on that morning when the pictures were returned.’

‘I believe that was the first.’

‘And he has had none since—not till yesterday?’

‘Not to my knowledge.’

‘Then to my dying hour I shall know that the snapping of the thread was my deed.’

George Kirkoswald was silent a moment. With all possible desire to speak ‘large, divine, and comfortable words,’ he knew that there could be no divinity in words that were not truthful. On the face of it there seemed only too much probability that this self-accusation of Miss Richmond’s did not arise from an exaggerated view of the matter. And yet who could say?

‘It is *impossible* to say,’ he answered. ‘I know that even the uncertainty must be a most terrible thing to you, and I would that I might assure you that nothing that you have done could have had anything to do with the failure of his health; but you perceive I cannot do that. I can only say that no man nor woman may foresee the result of the smallest and most trivial-seeming action. A spoken word, a sentence in a letter, may have consequences we cannot even dream of. Our own acts pass beyond

sweetness, and rapture. Then she stepped from the boat, and only knew that once more she was folded close to a heart that was beating as wildly and as warmly as her own. . . . No words were said—there was no need of aught so poor and inadequate as words.

That one supreme hour of life, the hour to which the poet turns in his fullest ecstasy of mystic singing, was theirs; though it passed by, it would be theirs for evermore.

Such hours are typical; and attest the higher element in man—his capacity for exaltation above himself. To have attained to this height and dignity of loving is to have known the glory of human transfiguration.

You may step down from that height into the every-day life of humanity on earth, but you shall take with you as an abiding possession the insight and the gain of that hour of measureless grace.

* * * *

Mrs. Winterford was in London that day; she had gone there on business, and she had declined to take Genevieve into 'the heat and dust of the crowded city on a hot day in June.

The little lady was too well-bred to show the surprise she felt when she returned in the evening, and met her daughter in the chestnut avenue leaning on the arm of a tall, dark, distinguished-looking stranger.

'Mr. Kirkoswald, I am sure,' she said, accepting his assistance as she stepped from her carriage.

Then she gave him her hand, looking into his face with a look that he could not but feel to be critical. Happy as he was, that was a nervous moment.

Mrs. Winterford was not a woman to permit the stranger within her gates to feel strange for any length of time if she could help it; and she usually did help it. She had a quiet way of settling things, or rather of seeming to accept them as already settled. The great news of the day was all understood without a word.

'I cannot talk of it,' she said, sitting down in her pretty drawing-room to have a cup of tea before she went to dress for dinner. She was speaking more particularly to George Kirkoswald. 'You will understand that though I am so glad, it is half a pain. I

CHAPTER LXVIII.

'THE DAY SO PLACID IN ITS GOING.'

'So bring him : we have idle dreams :
This look of quiet flatters thus
Our home-bred fancies : O to us,
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

'To rest beneath the clover sod,
That takes the sunshine and the rains,
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains
The chalice of the grapes of God.'

In Memoriam.

THEY had done all that might be done to make the stately yet shabby room seemly for the august Presence which had entered there. Jael, and the women who helped her, were of such a hand on the old traditions, and nothing was neglected. The crimson draperies of the room were replaced by white ; white coverlets were folded in conventional ways ; the toilet-glass was shrouded in fine white linen. The flowers that George Kirkoswald had procured with such difficulty were disposed everywhere. He had arranged these himself ; feeling a very agony of regret that this small service of love should be the last. . . . If he might only have known !

When he saw the carriage coming, bringing Canon Gabriel and Genevieve from the Rectory, George went out resolutely to the greenhouses at the bottom of the garden. No sight or sound of him should disturb her ; and as he went he thanked God earnestly that she was not alone.

Canon Gabriel went into the room where Noel Bartholomew was lying ; he went first, leaving Genevieve outside the door for a moment or two ; then he led her there to the side of the bed ; and they knelt together for awhile. Genevieve was calm, but the strength to look on the dead face was not yet hers. She was alone when the strength came.

Though the white curtains were drawn the room was yet filled with light, a soft, reverent, pure white light that helped to beautify everything it fell upon.

desires, and keener insight into human needs. I see more clearly now how certainly, and how pitifully—

“The world waits
For help. Beloved, let us love so well
Our work shall still be better for our love,
And still our love be sweeter for our work,
And both commended, for the sake of each,
By all true workers and true lovers born !”

EPILOGUE.

‘No cloud across the sun
But passes at the last, and gives us back
The face of God once more.’

CHARLES KINGSLEY : *The Saint's Tragedy*.

NOT that summer, but the summer that came after, when the heather of Langbarugh Moor was just turning to purple, the master and mistress of Usselby came back from sunnier lands to their own home by the North Sea. All the neighbourhood was glad to know of their coming.

Is it forgotten, all that ethical and æsthetical discussion of long ago? Mrs. Kirkoswald had not forgotten; she took it up where Genevieve Bartholomew had left it off—being moved to new remonstrance by the beauty of the home which her husband had prepared for her during the previous spring while she was abroad with Mrs. Winterford. He had to point out to her how simple its charms were; to lament over the many things he might have done but for that wholesome fear which had been laid upon him.

‘Here are chintz curtains, where silk or plush should have been,’ he said, ‘and English carpets where I would have preferred carpets from Turkey or Persia; and there is not an inch of gilding about the place.’

‘Because you know that gilding has gone out of fashion,’ said Genevieve, not disposed to allow her husband to be too triumphant over such self-denials as were visible here. But not even for the sake of keeping up the pleasantry of disapproval would she refuse to admit her complete delight with the true taste which had been displayed. The wide drawing-room with windows looking out

I leave you, my father?' she said, speaking with white, quivering lips. 'Must I leave you, not to see you any more? . . . And you have not spoken to me . . . not once. . . . I want to hear you speak again, my father, but once again.' She spoke softly, and as she spoke her voice changed; sobs broke it, the slow hot tears began to fall.

For a long time she knelt there; and the passion of weeping had its way, weeping which heals the heart's bruises in such mysterious ways, and with such effectiveness that the worst grief is never the same again as when it was dry and hard and tearless.

Genevieve's sorrow had never been hard, there was no hardness in her nature; and this loss was not of a kind to bring hardness. Neither was there fear of any kind; nor any dark dread of the silent land whither her father had gone.

He seemed very near to her as she knelt there. The knowledge that you can put out your hand and touch the face that is so close to yours if you will, is incompatible with the idea that he whom you may touch cannot hear you, or know of your existence.

Is there not always the idea that those who have but just gone cannot yet have gone very far?

Other thoughts came, other questions, other desires, such as may not be written; then at last the moment of parting came. It might have been terrible; but that yearning, aching sadness had no terror in it. The sting of death had been taken away, the victorious grave was the open gate of heaven.

The day when they laid him in his grave was a gray, quiet, sombre day. The sun did not shine upon it. Nature had no smile that morning; instead she dropped a few quiet tears, and her deep-drawn sighs came shivering downward from the moor, stirring the leafless boughs to a mournful movement that was like a gesture of sympathetic sadness.

Noel Bartholomew's grave had been made by the side of the one that had been made only a few short weeks before. 'He will be glad to have it so,' Genevieve said when the Canon told her. 'And I shall be glad.' The affectionate friendship that had been between the two who slept there came back to her with a new significance. Death, dark death, throws new light upon many things.

mew's death, sold for a sum that would have done more than cover the expenses of the household at Netherbank during all those days of hardship, and distress of mind, and actual want. It could not be that Genevievè should hear of this, and not weep as she heard it.

She remained silent till they had passed or on into another room ; then she looked up, and her husband saw that she was smiling through her tears.

'Then I have some money of my own now?' she asked.

'You have a very respectable sum of your own,' replied George. 'What is your instant intention to do with it?'

'I shall give a grand entertainment in Soulsgrif Bight the day after to-morrow.'

'Very well, dear ; then I will leave you to make out your list of guests, and compose a programme.'

'You must certainly not leave me ; I shall want all the help you can give.'

The feast was not made that week, but it was made at the end of the week following ; and the poor and the rich were called together in a way which had become quite fashionable in the neighbourhood of Murk-Marishes since the building of the music-room. Mrs. Winterford, who was staying at the Hall, went down with Mr. and Mrs. Kirkoswald, the latter dressed in a pretty white dress and a straw hat with white wild roses on it. Canon Gabriel came, the beautiful smile playing more sweetly than ever about his fine worn face, and lighting up the patient, pathetic, spiritual eyes. And it need hardly be said that Mr. and Mrs. Crudas had received a special invitation. They came over from Swarthcliff Top in the newest and neatest little dogcart that was ever driven down a steep cliff-side. Dorothy was looking radiant in her wedding-dress of lilac silk, and a pretty bonnet to match.

'She disn't leuk a daäy mair nor five-and-thirty,' said Mr. Crudas, speaking to Mrs. Kirkoswald. 'Ah declare there's times when Ah feel shamed o' 'goin' about wiv a young-lookin' wife like that at my aäge. Never mind. Ah's a good bit off sixty yet ; an' they tell me Jacob was seventy when he began to wait them fourteen years for Rachel.'

Mr. Crudas was not an uncommunicative man, but he never

I have no money, and I have no talent that would bring me bread'; and so thinking, she might for her own convenience, or rather for her life's continuance, have been glad to accept such a home as that open to her at Havilands. Fortunately both for herself and Mrs. Winterford, these thoughts had not come yet. Genevieve only knew that her godmother, who had been very dear to her real mother, was the one friend to whom she could have yielded herself in this complete and passive way. No thought of dependence crossed her mind, because she knew that it could never cross the mind of Mrs. Winterford. True affection, true friendship, knows nothing of benefits conferred or received.

As far as possible, Mrs. Winterford made her arrangements with the Canon's aid alone. He was to see Miss Craven, to ask her to take Keturah until another place could be found for her; to pay aught that might be owing; to engage someone to pack up all that had belonged to Noel Bartholomew and to his daughter, and see that the packages were forwarded to Havilands. The pictures and the furniture of the studio were to be sent to Meyer and Calanson's. The dead artist had mentioned to Canon Gabriel, as well as to his daughter, his intention about the disposal of his works.

All this was arranged on that first evening; and then the Canon disclosed to Mrs. Winterford, as gently as he could, all that he knew of George Kirkoswald's love for Genevieve. That was how he spoke of it, because that was the side of the matter that he knew most about.

'You do not speak as if the engagement were a definite one?' Mrs. Winterford said, trying to hide the sudden sinking of heart that the news caused her. 'And, indeed, if it had been, I think I should have heard of it.'

'I am sure you would have heard of it,' the Canon said. They were sitting together in his book-lined study. The little white-haired lady with her white cap and glistening fringes sat by the fire, looking into the Canon's worn, gentle, finely-furrowed face, listening to his pure musical voice with appreciation of its music. 'I am sure you would have been told at once,' he said. 'And I think I should have been told too. But there has been pain, and some mistake, some mystery. I only guess its nature, and therefore I may not speak of it. I think it is at an end; but events

Of late she had displayed a strong liking for Mrs. Gordon, and she had no greater pleasure now than to knit fine woollen stockings for her and for her son. Wilfred Stuart was charged long ago to see that the poor woman had no care nor any pain that could be averted. . . . She still walks up and down over the rocks in the Bight, still looks out for her little Davy, expecting to see him as she saw him in her dream, far out upon the waters of a wide and shining sea.

Most of the people there were known to Mr. and Mrs. Kirkoswald, but a few new faces were in the crowd. There were the new people who had come to Hunsgarth Haggs, and the carpenter who had taken the cottage at Netherbank, and had restored the studio to its original use. He has a young wife, and a wee girl who can trot along the corn-fields and stand at the stile to watch for the pretty lady who rides by with her husband, and who manages somehow to hide a pocket for sweets in the folds of her habit.

Mrs. Caton, Mrs. Damer, the Pencefolds, Miss Standen, indeed the *élite* of Thurkeld Abbas generally, went down to Soulsgrif Bight on the day of rejoicing. The entertainment was very much of the nature of a picnic, and luncheon was served out of doors in a green sheltered spot between the cliffs beyond the music-room. The local band played its loudest, ladies fluttered about in dresses of the gayest fashion, the blue sea was at its bluest, and a soft cool wind came off the water, tempering the heat of the August sun. Perhaps there was no greener, fresher, happier spot that day in England than the bight under the tall cliffs of Soulsgrif.

Keturah was there — proud of being under-housemaid at Usselby, and Jael and old Charlock were among the guests. These two had just retired to a cottage at Thurkeld Abbas, and were not sorry to retire. They were old now, both of them, and it was not to be expected of them that they should put up with the new-fangled ways of the new servants who had come to Usselby. They live rent-free in a cottage with a garden large enough to require all the thought and strength that old Ben can give.

More than once as the day went Genevieve found herself look-

knew why he did it now. Was there any vague hope in him that Genevieve might see him for a minute or two? Surely she could trust him not to speak of aught that might not yet be spoken of! He had just destroyed that letter which he had written ten days ago; he had put it into the fire without breaking the seal, having the very general feeling that one's own letters are seldom pleasant reading. . . . What unpleasant things time can make of some of them!

So, with a little fluttering about his heart, he went up to the Rectory. If he might but just see her, but just hold her hand, and look into her eyes for one moment, he would ask no more. There was something that was almost a smile about his mouth as he shook hands with Canon Gabriel; but the Canon did not respond to that buoyant and rather hopeful glance. Instead he said at once:

'I have some news that will surprise you, and not agreeably, I am afraid. But sit down. . . . There is nothing very sad about it in one sense.'

'It concerns Miss Bartholomew? Is she ill?'

'No, I am thankful to say. She seemed better than I had hoped this morning. Fragile as she looks, she is naturally strong. But it will be better to tell you all at once. Mrs. Winterford, her friend and godmother, came yesterday; and this morning she went away again, taking Genevieve with her. They have gone direct to Havilands.'

For a considerable time George Kirkoswald made no reply. He sat looking into the fire; a quick dash of sleety snow came beating with a sudden spitefulness upon the window-pane. The study was growing dark.

'Havilands is near to Dorking, I think?' he remarked presently.

'Yes, somewhere between Dorking and Leatherhead. It is a very lovely place, I believe.'

'And what is Mrs. Winterford like?'

'She is like a good, charming, motherly little lady, nearly sixty years of age, I should say,' the Canon replied. 'Her love for Genevieve is beautiful to see, it is so tender, so almost deferential, and yet so wise. To have seen her is to find a load gone from my heart. . . . I wish much that you might have seen her too!'

begun. The time to understand this fully is acknowledged always to be the present time, and just now that is the month of May. The very birds comprehend it—the thrush and the black-bird, the chaffinch and the warbling willow wren. And the trees attest it—the golden sycamore that shines in the morning sun like the burning bush on Mount Horeb, the fringed and tasselled larches, the alder with its soft display of tiny flowers and downward-dropping leaves. The fruit-trees flush to crimson for the coming gladness of the land, and yet again the wild-flowers dance in the green meadows where the lark drops suddenly down to a restful hidden silence, like a poet seeking seclusion while the world praises his latest song.

‘This is the kind of morning to feel one’s life in all its fulness,’ George Kirkoswald says. He is walking up and down the terrace in front of the house, and he is speaking to his wife, who is by his side. She is wearing a white morning dress, her golden hair catches the sunshine, her dark beautiful eyes are full of life’s gladness and holiness.

‘Yes,’ she replies; ‘I have just been wondering over the fulness of life, wondering if the next two-and-twenty years could possibly be so full of experience as the two-and-twenty that are gone. I feel rather like the philosopher—was it not Mill?—who grieved lest it should some day be discovered that there could be no new combinations of musical sound.’

‘I do not know enough of music to be able to set a philosopher’s fears to rest on that point,’ George answers, ‘but I do know something of human life; and I know that life, if it be lived with any truth and earnestness, can never fail to present to him who lives it enough of freshness and vitality to make it worth living. If a man would live fully, he must live deeply. It seems to me that the fault of the day is the fear of going below the surface. The upheaval will come from below, and it will come before long if oil be not poured upon the troubled waters presently. Even in these remote districts the consciousness of dissatisfied—I may almost say outraged—humanity is awakening. And we are altogether blind—blind and deaf. It is neither our money nor our lands that the people desire. The majority of the suffering poor would recoil from the idea of taking by violence the things that

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It is, of course, only visible between the showers. When the snow is actually falling there is nothing but the thick whiteness, which is dusky yellow if you look upward, or towards nightfall dusky gray. There is hardly a more mournful time than the twilight that is darkened by thick, fast-falling snow.

It is mournful enough in towns and villages, but if you would know it at its worst you must seek out some lone house on the edge of a Yorkshire moor, accessible only by bad roads, and some miles distant from the necessities of life. To add to your appreciation of the moment, you should be responsible for the well-being of the household, and your means should be of the narrowest, so as to preclude your having had stores of anything in readiness for such a catastrophe as lies within the meaning of the simple words 'snowed up.'

Poor Dorothy Craven was feeling as if every flake was falling upon her heart with anything but snow-like lightness. The winter altogether had been a dark time for her. The bad harvest had proved in the event to be very bad. The downward trend of things had become more marked than ever since the thrashing out of the scant spoiled corn, which had been pronounced to be unfit for human food. Dorothy knew that it was unfit—the black, heavy, moist loaf on her own table was proof enough of that. Even when she had bought a sack of good foreign flour to mix with her own, the product was hardly eatable. Yet Miss Craven ate of it daily, with many a sad and secret wonder as to the ways of an inscrutable Providence.

This was not the worst. Black bread was bad, but unpaid rent was worse; and now a whole year's rent was owing; at May-day it would be a year and a half. . . . It was very certain that the coming May would see the end of things at Hunsgarth Hags.

If a last straw had been needed, surely it had come in the shape of this late snowstorm. The few sheep that were left were huddled together in the frozen stackyard, the cattle were housed, and were feeding on the black, worthless hay. It was no wonder that the

That was nearly a week ago. Miss Craven could hardly remember the time when a week had passed without a visit from Ishmael Crudas. She knew well enough that it was not the weather that prevented his coming. Was he ill—lying down there in that wide, lonely house by the sea-cliffs, with no one to tend or care for him? Had he gone from home? Had any accident happened to him?

This was the first time for many years that she had needed to have any anxiety about him, and anxiety seldom does aught toward lessening a woman's affection. Many a love has been first discovered to its possessor in a time of waiting and dread.

And still the dark, wild gusts swept over the moor, laden with the thick drifting snow. The hedges and the low stone walls that were about the farm were not to be discerned. The stillness grew more and more intense; it was almost appalling. The very blackbird upon the eaves seemed afraid of his own short, plaintive note, and only piped at rare intervals. A half-frozen robin and two starlings went indoors boldly, and sat in panting silence wherever they were allowed to sit.

And all the while, day by day and hour by hour, old Joseph Craven, walking up and down over the sanded floor, uttered his melancholy burden, varying it, turning it, yet leaving it always the same:

'For ever, for ever, for ever, the white snow drifts upon Langbarugh Moor!'

Dorothy made no attempt to hinder the words that wearied her so. She sat by her mother's side knitting quickly, almost excitedly, as if the mere mechanical movement of her hands was a necessity of her existence. There was nothing else to be done. She could not see to do anything else. The snow had frozen thickly upon the window-pane, filling the house with gloom; the wind was muttering heavily round the farm; the snow came down the wide chimney, hissing upon the fire as it fell. If there had been no poverty, no lack of aught, no sadness, no dread, that snowstorm would still have been a wearying and gloomy thing.

The twilight was adding its gloom to the other glooms now, yet Dorothy did not put her knitting away. The clock ticked slowly, the fire burned dimly; her father still walked up and

and the pitiful bleating of the sheep which were huddled together under the stable wall. The wind was lulled for a moment.

Her father came out to her as she stood there. 'Ya can hear him noo, Dorothy? ya can hear him noo?' the old man said excitedly. 'He's up yonder, ower by the mere. Ya can hear him singin'. Hearken, then! hearken!':

" Oh, slowly, slowly, raise she up,
To the place where he was lyin';
And when she drew the curtain by,
'Young man, I think ye're dyin'.' "

Was she dreaming? Was it not impossible that the sound of a man's voice should reach from the road that crossed the moor to Hunsgarth Hags? The distance was said to be nearer two miles than one. Surely it was impossible! And yet—yet, if she had ever heard Ishmael Crudas singing

' Be kind to Barbara Allan,'

then assuredly she heard him now.

She did not stop to think. There was an old plaided shawl lying folded on a chair which she threw round her as she went out. 'Hanson!' she cried, as she rushed past the open door of the cow-house, 'Hanson! follow me!'

And Hanson followed her, out through the stackyard gate into the deep drift that was lying there in the upland pathway. The snow was harder than it had been, yet they sank at almost every step. Fortunately, the wind was not just then in its gustiest mood, and the snow was only falling lightly, softly, in the gathering twilight. But though things were so favourable, it was a whole long hour before they stood by the edge of the tiny moorland lake known as Haverah Mere.

Dorothy had not spoken, nor had she heard any sound to guide her on her way. That one line of the song that she had heard before she left the house was ringing in her ears still; it had certainly come, as her father had said, from that quarter of the moor where the mere was; and though it must have come against the wind, the seeming absurdity of her proceeding never struck her.

She had said to herself in the beginning that she would go as far as the mere if that were possible, and now she stood by the

hurrying on. Then, again, there came a sign ; again the shrill voice rose on the wind, crying only :

‘ Wae to Barbara Allan !’

She reached the spot from whence the sound had come at last. It was no delusion, no false voice sent to lure her to her destruction, as she had imagined more than once it might be. There, in the drifted, trackless snow a man had fallen by the side of a fallen horse, and the man was Ishmael Crudas.

The horse was dead ; some seizure had come upon him, and the snows of Langbarugh Moor were making for him a grave.

His master was lying there with his head upon the flank of the dappled-gray that had been to him as a friend. It was doing him service still, being protection from both wind and snow. At the moment when Dorothy Craven reached the spot Ishmael Crudas slept, but his sleep was the sleep that comes between the delirious moments of high fever.

He awoke to her voice, to her touch, when she dashed away the snow that was gathering about him, but he had no power to rouse himself. If he opened his eyes she could not see, but when he spoke, or rather sang, faintly and out of tune, she heard all too plainly :

‘ “ It’s oh, I’m sick, I’m very, very sick,
An’ it’s a’ for Barbara Allan.” ’

‘ But “ Barbara Allan ” is here,’ Dorothy said. ‘ Or if it is not “ Barbara Allan,” it is Dorothy Craven, and I guess one will do as well as the other just now.’

But the prostrate man did not understand, as he stood there before he was able to rise to his feet, bestirred with all the way from Haverah Mere to Hunsbury came to him like a new forgotten by any one of those three

February night. The moon was up over the brow of the moor. It hung like a hot sun was pouring down. A hot sun was pouring down. world of gray and golden clinging up the sky ; butterflies hovered altogether, and the three were striking ten when they entered slowly up toward the house. There farm.

h wreaths of purple clematis dropping

done an unwise thing in presuming to enter this earthly paradise uninvited and unannounced. Yet the plan had had an irresistible attraction for him beforehand; and when all was said, he was but intending to make a call. Surely any friend of Miss Bartholomew's might venture to call to see her in the house where she had made her home.

Only a very few days before, Canon Gabriel had dropped a hint which had startled George not too pleasantly. The Canon had received a letter from Mrs. Winterford, in which that lady had spoken of the possibility there was of her going to Switzerland for a few weeks, and taking Miss Bartholomew with her. The matter was not settled, but Genevieve was needing change, she said. The girl had begun to droop in unaccountable ways, and nothing would be so certain to revive her as the foreign travel for which she had always longed. Mrs. Winterford would write again when anything definite had been come to.

George had left Usselby the next day; and now he was wandering here, alone, in Mrs. Winterford's garden. He had found a wicket-gate at the farther end of the place, and an old woman, who was evidently supposed to be weeding, had directed him to make his way up to the house between the avenues of flowers that were standing tall, and still, and beautiful on every side. For a moment or two he had a sense of reminiscence, and then it occurred to him that it was Noel Bartholomew's lovely garden-scene that was behind the momentary confusion of his brain. The white, graceful Madonna lilies seemed as if they whispered together of the dead artist; and the rose-sprays moved with little gestures of sadness—or so he fancied, as he stood there in that woven wilderness of emerald green bestarred with all the summer flowers of the land. Accustomed as he had been to the sight of beauty of all kinds, this beauty came to him like a new emotion.

No sound broke the perfect stillness of the place. It was the time of day when birds are mute. A hot sun was pouring down. White fleecy cloudlets were floating up the sky; butterflies hovered by on silent wing.

George went on wandering slowly up toward the house. There was a little rustic arbour with wreaths of purple clematis dropping

second and successful attempt to save the lives of the crew of the *Viking*. But the one scene that came more vividly than all the rest was the tall white figure standing out against the black rock, just above the wild, mad rushing of the yeasty waves. And as he thought of it again, he felt the thrill that went through him as he held Genevieve Bartholomew for one perilous moment in his arms—perilous and precious, and to be remembered for evermore.

And as he walked on there came to him the memory of that second time when his arm had enfolded her. Then also there had been peril, and pain, and dark fear below the rapture of the moment.

Surely if there had been aught ominous about those days the omen had spent itself now. Love's way had never run smoothly since. But this was no time for looking back, and looking sadly. The very air about him, the stir and scent of the flowers, the sparkling of the glassy water—all these things were against one thought of doubt, or fear, or sadness.

And still the enchanted boat went on over the enchanted lake. It was near the lower end now, where a great elm-tree over-shadowed the water, and where the white chalices of the lilies were more thickly clustered together. The little craft went on ; there was a slight shudder when the keel caught a great tangled root, and then the golden head was raised ; the face that was as a wild June rose was lifted in wonder. . . . Surely she had not been sleeping !

Genevieve stooped for her hat, which had fallen to the bottom of the boat, and the next moment she turned suddenly. There was something moving among the rose-bushes—someone was there !

'Can I help you to land?' asked a clear, penetrating voice that seemed as if it were subdued by the softness of the beauty that was everywhere.

A tall dark figure stood by the elm-tree bole ; a little cry answered him ; quick, hot blushes poured like a tide over the face that was so near his. George's hand was already on the bow of the boat drawing it into a tiny green and golden creek. There was no doubt about anything, no hesitation. Genevieve gave him both her hands with a look of unutterable tenderness, and

mean to be very good, but you will let me be good in my own way ; and I fear my way will be a very silent way so far as this is concerned. I am glad from the bottom of my heart, but I cannot hide the fact that I am also very sorrowful.'

George had already arranged to stay for a few days at the station hotel half a mile distant, where he had left his luggage. He would have gone back to dress for dinner ; but this Mrs. Winterford would not permit. There was no one but Genevieve and herself ; and though the little lady was somewhat ceremonious, she knew how to excuse ceremony with perfect grace at the right moment.

That evening, and many subsequent evenings, George dined at Havilands, and it hardly need be said that he found his way to the garden that nestled in the green hollow at hours when there was no question of dinner. Those days went by in such a passionate peace as he had never known, such as Genevieve had never dreamed.

If the memory of him who was not came there at times, making 'one and one with a shadowy third,' the remembrance had no pain save the pain of separation. 'I have learnt,' Genevieve said, 'to feel almost glad for him, that he is at rest. Everything beautiful and peaceful speaks to me of him ; and I seem to know that he is near. It is only at times now that I have that terrible aching because I cannot see him, or hear him speak as he used to speak. He was so brave, so patient, and it made me feel patient only to be with him.'

'And now you will have to help to make me brave,' George said. They were walking down by the side of the still waters. The flowers were sleeping in the late twilight ; the tops of the tall trees stirred against the deep blue of the summer evening sky. 'I believe that is the secret of half my love for you,' he said, raising the white hand he held to his lips as he spoke. 'The yearning I have always had to live a higher life seemed to become more than a mere yearning from the day I met you. I suppose one ought to be capable of living up to one's best alone ; but there are minds which need the warmth of human contact, and mine is one of them. Since I have known you, such good as may be in me has been a different thing—a more vital thing, with more practical

over the sea had been entirely refurnished. Soft pale tints were blended together so that no colour seemed to prevail, but yielded a general harmony of tones that was as pleasant as a piece of good subdued music. There was a new grand piano of exquisite touch and tone. The walls were half covered with her father's water-colour drawings beautifully framed.

'How did you get these?' Genevieve asked, laying her hand gently on her husband's arm, and speaking in a voice that was not free from tremulousness.

'I bought them at the sale, little one.'

'You were there, at that sale? . . . And you have never told me?'

'I thought it better not to tell you, not till now,' George said, putting his arm round her tenderly as if to shield her from any pain there might be in going back over the past.

And in a sense it was certainly painful. As soon as Bartholomew's death had become known there had gathered instantly about his name and work that buzz and babel of idle praise which when it has been denied while the life was being lived, and the work done, is almost as much a disgrace to the living as it is an insult to the dead. This had been Bartholomew's own view of a state of things which he had anticipated for himself. 'It will be with me as it was with Millet and Méryon and scores of others,' he said, and his prophecy had been fulfilled to the letter.

He would hardly have been surprised if he could have known that his beautiful *Ænone*, for which in his more sanguine moments he had expected to get five hundred pounds, had risen in value by his death till it was considered to be worth three thousand. That was the sum paid down for it at Messrs. Meyer and Calanson's.

It was the same with the *Judas*. Genevieve did not know what price her father had expected to get for this picture; but he had certainly not expected to receive the sum of two thousand two hundred and fifty pounds.

Everything else that had been sent to the sale, the merest sketches—nay, the very sweepings of the studio—had been bought in the same reckless and uncomprehending manner. The sketch for the *Good Samaritan*, done in two days preceding Bartholo-

told the world what wild errand had led him over Langbarugh Moor in the middle of a heavy snowstorm. Three days before, when the storm was only just beginning, he had ridden over the moor to Crosthwaite Station and had left his horse there while he took the train and went on to York. He had no business at York save the transfer of a cheque for the sum of two hundred pounds. The cheque was made out in the name of a friendly banker's clerk, and it was enclosed in a letter addressed by the same obliging young man to Miss Dorothy Craven, and left to be posted five days later, so that there might be no suspicion. A little note was enclosed intimating that the cheque was 'conscience money.'

Returning to Crosthwaite, he had stayed there two of the five days, fearing much that his continued absence would reach the ears of Miss Craven. On the third day he set out, choosing to run some risk of being lost in the snow rather than run the risk of failing to help the woman he loved in a strait so desperate as hers was then.

But though he has never disclosed his errand, he is to this day fond of telling the story of how he was lost, and how he was found in a snowstorm on the heights of Langbarugh Moor. His experience had certainly been peculiar. After the stage of suffering and misery and darkness was over, a whole world of pleasant dreams and hallucinations had taken possession of his brain. He had seemed to enter into warm, brilliantly lighted, and richly furnished houses; to see the tables loaded with glittering glass and silver, and tempting food and wine. He had seemed to himself to be hot and thirsty, and rich fruits of all colours and all kinds had been placed before him, piled in profusion on dishes of sparkling crystal; but he had not been allowed to touch the fruit. When he put out his hand it was drawn away. It was the same with the other food and the wines; he might only see them there. He had no recollection of any face or voice, nor had he any remembrance of having raised his own voice to sing 'Barbara Allan.' . . . Now Mr. Crudas sings 'Barbara Allan' no more, and he says he is looking out for a song to take the place of it.

Poor Ailsie Drewe was there when the people gathered that they might be glad together, and so the better remember their gladness. Ailsie went about smiling gently, uncomprehendingly.

ing out toward the turn of the road where once before she had so unexpectedly seen Miss Richmond's carriage descending. It was just possible that Diana might come down to-day, and Mrs. Kirkoswald half hoped that she might. They had met once—one day when there was quite a little crowd in the drawing-room at Usselby—and Genevieve had seen at a glance the change that had come over the face and the ways of the proud, imperious, changeful woman, who had always been so puzzling and so bewildering, and who yet had had power to compel at least a strong interest in herself. The thing she had compelled she was able to win now. The wistful and pathetic sadness on her face lent to it an altogether new beauty. It was hardly possible to see that look of intense loneliness, of hidden pain and regret, and not desire to pass beyond the conventionalities that condemn people to the superficial intercourse which has value neither for him who gives nor for him who receives.

In answer to Genevieve's invitation for to-day Miss Richmond had written a brief note, asking if she might leave the matter undecided. She would have been glad to go, yet she dreaded going; and when the day came her dread was greater than her desire. 'They may forgive,' she said to herself; 'they may even forget, but I cannot—I would not if I could forget. . . . If, as George Kirkoswald says, there is any hope for me, it can only come by ceaselessly remembering.'

Genevieve was sorry, the first time she went to Yarrell, to find that Miss Richmond was not at home. 'She had gone up to the moor,' Kendle said; and George Kirkoswald and his wife went home by another way.

Is this the end of any history touched upon here? All lives have a history, and it does not need effective incident to make a true human story interesting. How very interesting any tale is that is told simply and openly, and not by parables! But it is expedient that the truth should be veiled at times. We throw a veil over the very life we are living, as over a statue or a picture that is not completed. It is Death who comes and gives the finishing touches, and leaves the completed work all rounded, and seemly, and intelligible.

At Usselby Hall it is well understood that life has only just

justly belong to others. It is not our possessions that they crave : it is our due sympathy, our thought for their welfare, our goodwill, our care for their lives, our human and Christian loving-kindness. Had we but ever so faintly apprehended that Sermon on the Mount, there had not been that dread among Christian nations which is rising and gathering now. . . . If we can bring but a stone to repair the ancient pathways, in God's name let us bring it. So we shall find our life here, and even so we may trust its Hereafter.'

THE END.

'I shall see her before long,' said George resolutely, rising to his feet as he spoke, and smoothing out the contractions that had gathered about his forehead. He could perceive already that this thing that was causing him such great and unexpected disappointment was the best thing possible for her he loved. Love is worth nothing that cannot acquiesce in the good of the one beloved, even though that good lie outside of him and all his effort, all his cognizance.

Yet it was a lonely going back for him. He felt that he had never been glad enough that Genevieve had been so near. He could not picture her in that new and unknown home, with that new and unknown friend whose love and opportunities for showing love seemed to defraud him somewhat. He would have to live in the future while the slow days were passing now; but he could not look cheerfully into the days to be with that chill piercing gust coming round him in the darkness, dashing the snow into his face, and half-blinding him. That brief bright February spring which comes so often in this strange climate of ours was at an end. It had given place to that second winter which, as a rule, proves to be a worse winter than the first.

CHAPTER LXIX.

THE DRIFTING SNOW UPON LANGBARUGH MOOR.

'Yet turn again, thou faire damselle,
And greete thy queene from mee;
When bale is at hyst, boote is nyest,
Now helpe enoughe may bee.'

The Ballad of Sir Aldingar.

ALL the year that cry that was for ever upon old Joseph Craven's lips had no meaning—none but that tragic meaning which was connected with it when it first broke from his lips. Now once more it came mournfully and appositely.

'The snaw's allus driftin' ower Langbarugh Moor!'

For three days it had been drifting. The land lay white and still under a lowering, threatening snow-cloud of dark indigo blue.

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This was not the worst. Black bread was bad, but unpaid rent was worse; and now a whole year's rent was owing; at May-day it would be a year and a half. . . . It was very certain that the coming May would see the end of things at Hunsgarth Hagg.

If a last straw had been needed, surely it had come in the shape of this late snowstorm. The few sheep that were left were huddled together in the frozen stackyard, the cattle were housed, and were feeding on the black, worthless hay. It was no wonder that the

little milk that the cows gave was blue and thin, and that it had no cream to speak of. It was only in keeping with all the rest. The very fowls were not laying. For weeks past there had been no farm produce of any kind to be taken to Thurkeld Abbas, to exchange for groceries or for animal food. For over a week now the daily dinner for Miss Craven, her father and mother, and the one farm lad, had consisted mainly of a pigeon or two shot by Hanson as they clustered together on the snow-covered remains of the last haystack.

Mr. Crudas was not unaware of this state of things; he was mindful to keep himself as much alive to it as was possible. Dorothy told him nothing that she could help telling; but, as he was in the habit of saying to himself, 'If I *is* a bit deäf, I isn't blind yet;' and, indeed, though love may blind the eyes, as it is said to do, assuredly it does but give double seeing power to the heart.

Ishmael Crudas saw a great deal more than he wished to see, and the sight made his heart ache more than Miss Craven imagined. And she had not permitted him to speak of his heart-ache of late. Some time ago she had forbidden all protestation. He might come to the house if he chose, or he might choose not to come; but if he came he must be silent about the one wish and desire that was left to him.

He had not been obedient. The thing was always present with him, and it could not be but that it should declare its continued existence in one way or another. If he might not plead openly, he could take care that no chance of inserting a hint was ever lost. He did not mind Dorothy's glances. Another man might have found them deterrent and forbidding, but Mr. Crudas knew her well enough and loved her well enough to dare to brave any number of them. To him they were but a proof that he was not indifferent to her.

He had not been up at Hunsgarth Haggs since the snowstorm set in. The last time Miss Craven had seen him had been in the churchyard at Thurkeld Abbas on the day when Noel Bartholomew had been laid there to rest. Their eyes had met then through tears and sorrow; and it was but natural that each should see on the face of the other an expression of sympathetic kindness that was not too common there.

That was nearly a week ago. Miss Craven could hardly remember the time when a week had passed without a visit from Ishmael Crudas. She knew well enough that it was not the weather that prevented his coming. Was he ill—lying down there in that wide, lonely house by the sea-cliffs, with no one to tend or care for him? Had he gone from home? Had any accident happened to him?

This was the first time for many years that she had needed to have any anxiety about him, and anxiety seldom does aught toward lessening a woman's affection. Many a love has been first discovered to its possessor in a time of waiting and dread.

And still the dark, wild gusts swept over the moor, laden with the thick drifting snow. The hedges and the low stone walls that were about the farm were not to be discerned. The stillness grew more and more intense; it was almost appalling. The very blackbird upon the eaves seemed afraid of his own short, plaintive note, and only piped at rare intervals. A half-frozen robin and two starlings went indoors boldly, and sat in panting silence wherever they were allowed to sit.

And all the while, day by day and hour by hour, old Joseph Craven, walking up and down over the sanded floor, uttered his melancholy burden, varying it, turning it, yet leaving it always the same:

'For ever, for ever, for ever, the white snaw drifts upon Langbarugh Moor!'

Dorothy made no attempt to hinder the words that wearied her so. She sat by her mother's side knitting quickly, almost excitedly, as if the mere mechanical movement of her hands was a necessity of her existence. There was nothing else to be done. She could not see to do anything else. The snow had frozen thickly upon the window-pane, filling the house with gloom; the wind was muttering heavily round the farm; the snow came down the wide chimney, hissing upon the fire as it fell. If there had been no poverty, no lack of aught, no sadness, no dread, that snowstorm would still have been a wearying and gloomy thing.

The twilight was adding its gloom to the other glooms now, yet Dorothy did not put her knitting away. The clock ticked slowly, the fire burned dimly; her father still walked up and

down from the dresser to the door; still kept on uttering the words that seemed filled afresh with sad meanings.

At last, quite suddenly, the old man stopped. He was close to the window.

‘Whisht!’ he said, in a strange, awestruck whisper. ‘Whisht, Dolly! . . . What’s he singin’ for? What’s he singin’ oot there for, where the snaw’s driftin’? It’s allus driftin’ ower Langbarugh Moor!’

Dorothy Craven was not a weak woman, not impressionable, yet she felt that the colour fled from her face. It was her father’s strange manner that moved her more than aught he said.

‘Who’s singing?’ she said, putting her knitting down, and going up to her father as he stood there in the attitude of one who listens intently.

‘Wheä’s singin’?’ the old man said, with a smile, ‘Whya lissen tiv her! She pretends she disn’t knaw Ishmal Crudds’s voice! . . . Hearken, then! hearken! Wheä is’t ’at sings yon sang?’—

“It’s oh, I’m sick, I’m very sick,
An’ it’s a’ for Barbara Allen.”’

For a moment Dorothy felt faint, yet unconsciously she was impelled to listen herself. But she could hear no sound save the sound of the wuthering wind, and the driving snow, and the hissing that was upon the wide hearthstone.

Doubtless this was a new fancy of her father’s weakened brain; yet she knew that he was not given to new fancies, and there was that in his manner which compelled more than her attention.

‘He’s oot yonder,’ the old man went on, with a new keen sparkle in his faded eyes, and a small spot of burning colour coming into either cheek. ‘Ishmal’s oot yonder, ower by Haverah Mere. . . . But what’s he singin’ for? what sud he staäy there singin’ i’ th’ driftin’ snaw for—the snaw that drifts for ever upon Langbarugh Moor?’

With a quiver on her lip Dorothy went out to the door that opened upon the stackyard. The snow was falling less heavily; there was a lurid gleam of light up over the edge of the white moorland. But the only sound she heard was the sound of the milk streaming into Hanson’s pail in the cow-house close at hand,

and the pitiful bleating of the sheep which were huddled together under the stable wall. The wind was lulled for a moment.

Her father came out to her as she stood there. 'Ya can hear him noo, Dorothy? ya can hear him noo?' the old man said excitedly. 'He's up yonder, ower by the mere. Ya can hear him singin'. Hearken, then! hearken!':

" Oh, slowly, slowly, raise she up,
To the place where he was lyin' ;
And when she drew the curtain by,
' Young man, I think ye're dyin'.' "

Was she dreaming? Was it not impossible that the sound of a man's voice should reach from the road that crossed the moor to Hunsgarth Hags? The distance was said to be nearer two miles than one. Surely it was impossible! And yet—yet, if she had ever heard Ishmael Crudas singing

' Be kind to Barbara Allan,'

then assuredly she heard him now.

She did not stop to think. There was an old plaided shawl lying folded on a chair which she threw round her as she went out. 'Hanson!' she cried, as she rushed past the open door of the cow-house, 'Hanson! follow me!'

And Hanson followed her, out through the stackyard gate into the deep drift that was lying there in the upland pathway. The snow was harder than it had been, yet they sank at almost every step. Fortunately, the wind was not just then in its gustiest mood, and the snow was only falling lightly, softly, in the gathering twilight. But though things were so favourable, it was a whole long hour before they stood by the edge of the tiny moorland lake known as Haverah Mere.

Dorothy had not spoken, nor had she heard any sound to guide her on her way. That one line of the song that she had heard before she left the house was ringing in her ears still; it had certainly come, as her father had said, from that quarter of the moor where the mere was; and though it must have come against the wind, the seeming absurdity of her proceeding never struck her.

She had said to herself in the beginning that she would go as far as the mere if that were possible, and now she stood by the

edge of the basin that enclosed it on three sides. It was frozen ; the snow was lying smoothly upon it, higher at one end than the other, apparently, but she could not see quite across to the other side. And yet it was not a dark night. Though it was long past the hour of sunset, and the moon had not yet risen, a light seemed to strike upward from the great unlevel plain of snow.

Hanson was by her side, wondering, breathless, half angry, wholly chilled. What could be his mistress's motive for such a wild vagary as this? He could only hope from the bottom of his heart that compensation would be made to him in the shape of supper.

Miss Craven had stopped on the northern edge of the mere. There was no sound, no sign. If there had been any footmarks it was too dark to discern them.

Should she cry aloud? Should she make known her presence there, so that if any wanderer were fallen into that sleep which is the sleep of death he might be roused to effort? Her lips parted to make some sound, but none came. She was nerveless, powerless. If she had had any hope it had lost its spring.

So she stood on the wild, snow-covered moorland. The wind was beginning to rise again ; her shawl fluttered past her face. She was growing cold and chill since her purpose had begun to fail.

Then suddenly, as she stood there, a shrill sound broke upon the night ; it seemed close at hand in the darkness when it began. Dorothy turned, stifling a sob that arose, lest it should prevent her hearing. Whence exactly did it come? It seemed farther away already. She clasped her hands passionately together as she stood with the snowflakes drifting into her face. In her ears the words were shrilling :

'She hadna gane a mile but twa
When she heard the deid-bell ringin',
And every jow the deid-bell gied,
It cried, "Wae to Barbara Allan."

'Wae, indeed !' she said to herself, as she went flying over the frozen snow. There was no sound now to guide her. For some minutes she went wandering on in the glisty darkness, now stopping for a moment, now stumbling, and rising again and

hurrying on. Then, again, there came a sign; again the shrill voice rose on the wind, crying only:

'Wae to Barbara Allan!'

She reached the spot from whence the sound had come at last. It was no delusion, no false voice sent to lure her to her destruction, as she had imagined more than once it might be. There, in the drifted, trackless snow a man had fallen by the side of a fallen horse, and the man was Ishmael Crudas.

The horse was dead; some seizure had come upon him, and the snows of Langbarugh Moor were making for him a grave.

His master was lying there with his head upon the flank of the dappled-gray that had been to him as a friend. It was doing him service still, being protection from both wind and snow. At the moment when Dorothy Craven reached the spot Ishmael Crudas slept, but his sleep was the sleep that comes between the delirious moments of high fever.

He awoke to her voice, to her touch, when she dashed away the snow that was gathering about him, but he had no power to rouse himself. If he opened his eyes she could not see, but when he spoke, or rather sang, faintly and out of tune, she heard all too plainly:

"'It's oh, I'm sick, I'm very, very sick,
An' it's a' for Barbara Allan.'"

'But "Barbara Allan" is here,' Dorothy said. 'Or if it is not "Barbara Allan," it is Dorothy Craven, and I guess one will do as well as the other just now.'

But the prostrate man did not understand, as he stood there before he was able to rise to his feet, bestirred with all the support he could get, as he had been to the way from Haverah Mere to Hunsbury came to him like a new forgotten by any one of those three February night. The moon was up, the light of the place. It was the brow of the moor. It hung like a hot sun was pouring down. world of gray and golden clouds up the sky; butterflies hovered altogether, and the three were striking ten when they entered slowly up toward the house. There farm. In wreaths of purple clematis dropping

Eh ! but I was reeght then,' the old man said, with a new and beautiful light spreading over his worn face as they went in. 'Eh ! but I was reeght. 'Twas you that was singin' upon Langbarugh Moor, then ! I said you were singin' there, though the snaw was driftin'. . . T' snaw's allus driftin' ower Langbarugh Moor !'

CHAPTER LXX.

'FRESH AS THE WILDING HEDGE-ROSE CUP.'

'Thus, 'twas granted me
To know he loved me to the depth and height
Of such large natures, ever competent,
With grand horizons by the sea or land,
To love's grand sunrise. Small spheres hold small fires,
But he loved largely, as a man can love
Who, baffled in his love, dares live his life,
Accept the ends which God loves, for his own,
And lift a constant aspect.'

MRS. BROWNING : *Aurora Leigh*.

WILL it not be refreshing to find that the scene has changed with apparent rapidity—that Murk-Marishes with its barren and profitless farms, Langbarugh Moor with its drifting snows, Soulsgrif Bight with its homely fisher-folk, have all had to give place to the summer sunshine of the South, to civilization, to all the softness of a rich pastoral beauty?

The house at Havilands stands in a hollow between wood-owned hills—round-topped gently-curving hills, disclosing no heathen crags, no masses of sterile sandstone. It is very truly already.¹⁰ 'She clasped of nestling green for poets made.' For a stood with the snowfla on a June day into the hollow, you see words were shrilling : athery, waving green which makes the

arly summer. Presently you perceive
'She hadna for chimneys, then a low red gable,
When she ing between the trees discloses to
And every jow
It cried, "Wassy harbour or two, a great fish-

'Wae, indeed !' she said to hers^{ter-lilies float, and where tall}
frozen snow. There was no sound^{sters.} The sloping banks of
minutes she went wandering on il^{very hue.}
stopping for a moment, now stumblin^{ning to think that he had}

done an unwise thing in presuming to enter this earthly paradise uninvited and unannounced. Yet the plan had had an irresistible attraction for him beforehand; and when all was said, he was but intending to make a call. Surely any friend of Miss Bartholomew's might venture to call to see her in the house where she had made her home.

Only a very few days before, Canon Gabriel had dropped a hint which had startled George not too pleasantly. The Canon had received a letter from Mrs. Winterford, in which that lady had spoken of the possibility there was of her going to Switzerland for a few weeks, and taking Miss Bartholomew with her. The matter was not settled, but Genevieve was needing change, she said. The girl had begun to droop in unaccountable ways, and nothing would be so certain to revive her as the foreign travel for which she had always longed. Mrs. Winterford would write again when anything definite had been come to.

George had left Usselby the next day; and now he was wandering here, alone, in Mrs. Winterford's garden. He had found a wicket-gate at the farther end of the place, and an old woman, who was evidently supposed to be weeding, had directed him to make his way up to the house between the avenues of flowers that were standing tall, and still, and beautiful on every side. For a moment or two he had a sense of reminiscence, and then it occurred to him that it was Noel Bartholomew's lovely garden-scene that was behind the momentary confusion of his brain. The white, graceful Madonna lilies seemed as if they whispered together of the dead artist; and the rose-sprays moved with little gestures of sadness—or so he fancied, as he stood there in that woven wilderness of emerald green bestarred with all the summer flowers of the land. Accustomed as he had been to the sight of beauty of all kinds, this beauty came to him like a new emotion.

No sound broke the perfect stillness of the place. It was the time of day when birds are mute. A hot sun was pouring down. White fleecy cloudlets were floating up the sky; butterflies hovered by on silent wing.

George went on wandering slowly up toward the house. There was a little rustic arbour with wreaths of purple clematis dropping

over it, and a table and two chairs inside it. On the table there was a piece of embroidered satin, and a tiny work-basket that he knew. He felt his face grow hot as he stood there ; and when he turned away his heart was beating. This nearness, this knowledge was almost enough for the moment.

He went on a little faster, nervously, unconsciously, and a sudden turn brought him to the side of the lakelet where the water-lilies were floating among the great, cool green leaves ; and the flags standing straight, and still, and double, being reflected downward as clearly as they stood upward. He had not seen before that there was an islet in the middle of the water, all covered with flowering shrubs and trailing branches, and rosy dropping blossoms. What was that gleaming line of blue and white half hidden among the scarlet honeysuckle ? Surely it was a little boat. . . . He went onward. The boat was drifting slowly, the oars dropped upon the rowlocks ; the crimson cushions pillowed a golden head half hidden by a straw hat with a black ribbon on it ; a white shawl was thrown over a heavy black dress. . . . It was Genevieve, and she slept. . . . The boat drifted onward toward an outlet that the water had at the farther end of the tiny lake. It was moving slowly, very slowly, brushing the yellow irises and the dropping woodbine. Still it moved : still Genevieve slept.

George had time to think a thousand things as he sauntered as noiselessly as might be over the turf-covered pathway ; turning now and then that he might keep near the drifting boat. There was a hedge of flowers between him and the lakelet, sometimes a tall hedge, sometimes a low one ; but he never lost sight of the golden head that lay sleeping upon the crimson cushions.

He remembered distinctly the moment when that fair, pure, impressive face had first struck upon his sight. The storm-wind of Soulsgrif Bight was playing rudely with the yellow rippling tresses ; the deep violet-gray eyes were lifted to his in anxious pain, the curved coral lips were parted to ask for any word of hope that he might have to give. . . . Surely it was but yesterday !

All that storm scene came back upon him—the dragging of the lifeboat overland, through the snow ; the difficulty of launching it from the sands of Soulsgrif ; the disabling stroke, the return ; the

second and successful attempt to save the lives of the crew of the *Viking*. But the one scene that came more vividly than all the rest was the tall white figure standing out against the black rock, just above the wild, mad rushing of the yeasty waves. And as he thought of it again, he felt the thrill that went through him as he held Genevieve Bartholomew for one perilous moment in his arms—perilous and precious, and to be remembered for evermore.

And as he walked on there came to him the memory of that second time when his arm had enfolded her. Then also there had been peril, and pain, and dark fear below the rapture of the moment.

Surely if there had been aught ominous about those days the omen had spent itself now. Love's way had never run smoothly since. But this was no time for looking back, and looking sadly. The very air about him, the stir and scent of the flowers, the sparkling of the glassy water—all these things were against one thought of doubt, or fear, or sadness.

And still the enchanted boat went on over the enchanted lake. It was near the lower end now, where a great elm-tree overshadowed the water, and where the white chalices of the lilies were more thickly clustered together. The little craft went on; there was a slight shudder when the keel caught a great tangled root, and then the golden head was raised; the face that was as a wild June rose was lifted in wonder. . . . Surely she had not been sleeping!

Genevieve stooped for her hat, which had fallen to the bottom of the boat, and the next moment she turned suddenly. There was something moving among the rose-bushes—someone was there!

'Can I help you to land?' asked a clear, penetrating voice that seemed as if it were subdued by the softness of the beauty that was everywhere.

A tall dark figure stood by the elm-tree bole; a little cry answered him; quick, hot blushes poured like a tide over the face that was so near his. George's hand was already on the bow of the boat drawing it into a tiny green and golden creek. There was no doubt about anything, no hesitation. Genevieve gave him both her hands with a look of unutterable tenderness, and

sweetness, and rapture. Then she stepped from the boat, and only knew that once more she was folded close to a heart that was beating as wildly and as warmly as her own. . . . No words were said—there was no need of aught so poor and inadequate as words.

That one supreme hour of life, the hour to which the poet turns in his fullest ecstasy of mystic singing, was theirs; though it passed by, it would be theirs for evermore.

Such hours are typical; and attest the higher element in man—his capacity for exaltation above himself. To have attained to this height and dignity of loving is to have known the glory of human transfiguration.

You may step down from that height into the every-day life of humanity on earth, but you shall take with you as an abiding possession the insight and the gain of that hour of measureless grace.

* * * *

Mrs. Winterford was in London that day; she had gone there on business, and she had declined to take Genevieve into 'the heat and dust of the crowded city on a hot day in June.

The little lady was too well-bred to show the surprise she felt when she returned in the evening, and met her daughter in the chestnut avenue leaning on the arm of a tall, dark, distinguished-looking stranger.

'Mr. Kirkoswald, I am sure,' she said, accepting his assistance as she stepped from her carriage.

Then she gave him her hand, looking into his face with a look that he could not but feel to be critical. Happy as he was, that was a nervous moment.

Mrs. Winterford was not a woman to permit the stranger within her gates to feel strange for any length of time if she could help it; and she usually did help it. She had a quiet way of settling things, or rather of seeming to accept them as already settled. The great news of the day was all understood without a word.

'I cannot talk of it,' she said, sitting down in her pretty drawing-room to have a cup of tea before she went to dress for dinner. She was speaking more particularly to George Kirkoswald. 'You will understand that though I am so glad, it is half a pain. I

mean to be very good, but you will let me be good in my own way; and I fear my way will be a very silent way so far as this is concerned. I am glad from the bottom of my heart, but I cannot hide the fact that I am also very sorrowful.'

George had already arranged to stay for a few days at the station hotel half a mile distant, where he had left his luggage. He would have gone back to dress for dinner; but this Mrs. Winterford would not permit. There was no one but Genevieve and herself; and though the little lady was somewhat ceremonious, she knew how to excuse ceremony with perfect grace at the right moment.

That evening, and many subsequent evenings, George dined at Havilands, and it hardly need be said that he found his way to the garden that nestled in the green hollow at hours when there was no question of dinner. Those days went by in such a passionate peace as he had never known, such as Genevieve had never dreamed.

If the memory of him who was not came there at times, making 'one and one with a shadowy third,' the remembrance had no pain save the pain of separation. 'I have learnt,' Genevieve said, 'to feel almost glad for him, that he is at rest. Everything beautiful and peaceful speaks to me of him; and I seem to know that he is near. It is only at times now that I have that terrible aching because I cannot see him, or hear him speak as he used to speak. He was so brave, so patient, and it made me feel patient only to be with him.'

'And now you will have to help to make me brave,' George said. They were walking down by the side of the still waters. The flowers were sleeping in the late twilight; the tops of the tall trees stirred against the deep blue of the summer evening sky. 'I believe that is the secret of half my love for you,' he said, raising the white hand he held to his lips as he spoke. 'The yearning I have always had to live a higher life seemed to become more than a mere yearning from the day I met you. I suppose one ought to be capable of living up to one's best alone; but there are minds which need the warmth of human contact, and mine is one of them. Since I have known you, such good as may be in me has been a different thing—a more vital thing, with more practical

desires, and keener insight into human needs. I see more clearly now how certainly, and how pitifully—

‘“The world waits
For help. Beloved, let us love so well
Our work shall still be better for our love,
And still our love be sweeter for our work,
And both commended, for the sake of each,
By all true workers and true lovers born !”’

EPILOGUE.

‘No cloud across the sun
But passes at the last, and gives us back
The face of God once more.’

CHARLES KINGSLEY : *The Saint's Tragedy.*

NOR that summer, but the summer that came after, when the heather of Langbarugh Moor was just turning to purple, the master and mistress of Usselby came back from sunnier lands to their own home by the North Sea. All the neighbourhood was glad to know of their coming.

Is it forgotten, all that ethical and æsthetical discussion of long ago? Mrs. Kirkoswald had not forgotten; she took it up where Genevieve Bartholomew had left it off—being moved to new remonstrance by the beauty of the home which her husband had prepared for her during the previous spring while she was abroad with Mrs. Winterford. He had to point out to her how simple its charms were; to lament over the many things he might have done but for that wholesome fear which had been laid upon him.

‘Here are chintz curtains, where silk or plush should have been,’ he said, ‘and English carpets where I would have preferred carpets from Turkey or Persia; and there is not an inch of gilding about the place.’

‘Because you know that gilding has gone out of fashion,’ said Genevieve, not disposed to allow her husband to be too triumphant over such self-denials as were visible here. But not even for the sake of keeping up the pleasantry of disapproval would she refuse to admit her complete delight with the true taste which had been displayed. The wide drawing-room with windows looking out

over the sea had been entirely refurnished. Soft pale tints were blended together so that no colour seemed to prevail, but yielded a general harmony of tones that was as pleasant as a piece of good subdued music. There was a new grand piano of exquisite touch and tone. The walls were half covered with her father's water-colour drawings beautifully framed.

'How did you get these?' Genevieve asked, laying her hand gently on her husband's arm, and speaking in a voice that was not free from tremulousness.

'I bought them at the sale, little one.'

'You were there, at that sale? . . . And you have never told me?'

'I thought it better not to tell you, not till now,' George said, putting his arm round her tenderly as if to shield her from any pain there might be in going back over the past.

And in a sense it was certainly painful. As soon as Bartholomew's death had become known there had gathered instantly about his name and work that buzz and babel of idle praise which when it has been denied while the life was being lived, and the work done, is almost as much a disgrace to the living as it is an insult to the dead. This had been Bartholomew's own view of a state of things which he had anticipated for himself. 'It will be with me as it was with Millet and Méryon and scores of others,' he said, and his prophecy had been fulfilled to the letter.

He would hardly have been surprised if he could have known that his beautiful *Ænone*, for which in his more sanguine moments he had expected to get five hundred pounds, had risen in value by his death till it was considered to be worth three thousand. That was the sum paid down for it at Messrs. Meyer and Calanson's.

It was the same with the *Judas*. Genevieve did not know what price her father had expected to get for this picture; but he had certainly not expected to receive the sum of two thousand two hundred and fifty pounds.

Everything else that had been sent to the sale, the merest sketches—nay, the very sweepings of the studio—had been bought in the same reckless and uncomprehending manner. The sketch for the *Good Samaritan*, done in two days preceding Bartholo-

mew's death, sold for a sum that would have done more than cover the expenses of the household at Netherbank during all those days of hardship, and distress of mind, and actual want. It could not be that Genevievè should hear of this, and not weep as she heard it.

She remained silent till they had passed or on into another room ; then she looked up, and her husband saw that she was smiling through her tears.

'Then I have some money of my own now ?' she asked.

'You have a very respectable sum of your own,' replied George. 'What is your instant intention to do with it ?'

'I shall give a grand entertainment in Soulsgrif Bight the day after to-morrow.'

'Very well, dear ; then I will leave you to make out your list of guests, and compose a programme.'

'You must certainly not leave me ; I shall want all the help you can give.'

The feast was not made that week, but it was made at the end of the week following ; and the poor and the rich were called together in a way which had become quite fashionable in the neighbourhood of Murk-Marishes since the building of the music-room. Mrs. Winterford, who was staying at the Hall, went down with Mr. and Mrs. Kirkoswald, the latter dressed in a pretty white dress and a straw hat with white wild roses on it. Canon Gabriel came, the beautiful smile playing more sweetly than ever about his fine worn face, and lighting up the patient, pathetic, spiritual eyes. And it need hardly be said that Mr. and Mrs. Crudas had received a special invitation. They came over from Swarthcliff Top in the newest and neatest little dogcart that was ever driven down a steep cliff-side. Dorothy was looking radiant in her wedding-dress of lilac silk, and a pretty bonnet to match.

'She disn't leuk a daäy mair nor five-and-thirty,' said Mr. Crudas, speaking to Mrs. Kirkoswald. 'Ah declare there's times when Ah feel shamed o' 'goin' aboot wiv a young-lookin' wife like that at my aäge. Never mind. Ah's a good bit off sixty yet ; an' they tell me Jacob was seventy when he began to wait them fourteen years for Rachel.'

Mr. Crudas was not an uncommunicative man, but he never

told the world what wild errand had led him over Langbarugh Moor in the middle of a heavy snowstorm. Three days before, when the storm was only just beginning, he had ridden over the moor to Crosthwaite Station and had left his horse there while he took the train and went on to York. He had no business at York save the transfer of a cheque for the sum of two hundred pounds. The cheque was made out in the name of a friendly banker's clerk, and it was enclosed in a letter addressed by the same obliging young man to Miss Dorothy Craven, and left to be posted five days later, so that there might be no suspicion. A little note was enclosed intimating that the cheque was 'conscience money.'

Returning to Crosthwaite, he had stayed there two of the five days, fearing much that his continued absence would reach the ears of Miss Craven. On the third day he set out, choosing to run some risk of being lost in the snow rather than run the risk of failing to help the woman he loved in a strait so desperate as hers was then.

But though he has never disclosed his errand, he is to this day fond of telling the story of how he was lost, and how he was found in a snowstorm on the heights of Langbarugh Moor. His experience had certainly been peculiar. After the stage of suffering and misery and darkness was over, a whole world of pleasant dreams and hallucinations had taken possession of his brain. He had seemed to enter into warm, brilliantly lighted, and richly furnished houses ; to see the tables loaded with glittering glass and silver, and tempting food and wine. He had seemed to himself to be hot and thirsty, and rich fruits of all colours and all kinds had been placed before him, piled in profusion on dishes of sparkling crystal ; but he had not been allowed to touch the fruit. When he put out his hand it was drawn away. It was the same with the other food and the wines ; he might only see them there. He had no recollection of any face or voice, nor had he any remembrance of having raised his own voice to sing 'Barbara Allan.' . . . Now Mr. Crudas sings 'Barbara Allan' no more, and he says he is looking out for a song to take the place of it.

Poor Ailsie Drewe was there when the people gathered that they might be glad together, and so the better remember their gladness. Ailsie went about smiling gently, uncomprehendingly.

Of late she had displayed a strong liking for Mrs. Gordon, and she had no greater pleasure now than to knit fine woollen stockings for her and for her son. Wilfred Stuart was charged long ago to see that the poor woman had no care nor any pain that could be averted. . . . She still walks up and down over the rocks in the Bight, still looks out for her little Davy, expecting to see him as she saw him in her dream, far out upon the waters of a wide and shining sea.

Most of the people there were known to Mr. and Mrs. Kirkoswald, but a few new faces were in the crowd. There were the new people who had come to Hunsgarth Hagg, and the carpenter who had taken the cottage at Netherbank, and had restored the studio to its original use. He has a young wife, and a wee girl who can trot along the corn-fields and stand at the stile to watch for the pretty lady who rides by with her husband, and who manages somehow to hide a pocket for sweets in the folds of her habit.

Mrs. Caton, Mrs. Damer, the Pencefolds, Miss Standen, indeed the *élite* of Thurkeld Abbas generally, went down to Soulsgrif Bight on the day of rejoicing. The entertainment was very much of the nature of a picnic, and luncheon was served out of doors in a green sheltered spot between the cliffs beyond the music-room. The local band played its loudest, ladies fluttered about in dresses of the gayest fashion, the blue sea was at its bluest, and a soft cool wind came off the water, tempering the heat of the August sun. Perhaps there was no greener, fresher, happier spot that day in England than the bight under the tall cliffs of Soulsgrif.

Keturah was there — proud of being under-housemaid at Usselby, and Jael and old Charlock were among the guests. These two had just retired to a cottage at Thurkeld Abbas, and were not sorry to retire. They were old now, both of them, and it was not to be expected of them that they should put up with the new-fangled ways of the new servants who had come to Usselby. They live rent-free in a cottage with a garden large enough to require all the thought and strength that old Ben can give.

More than once as the day went Genevieve found herself look-

ing out toward the turn of the road where once before she had so unexpectedly seen Miss Richmond's carriage descending. It was just possible that Diana might come down to-day, and Mrs. Kirkoswald half hoped that she might. They had met once—one day when there was quite a little crowd in the drawing-room at Usselby—and Genevieve had seen at a glance the change that had come over the face and the ways of the proud, imperious, changeful woman, who had always been so puzzling and so bewildering, and who yet had had power to compel at least a strong interest in herself. The thing she had compelled she was able to win now. The wistful and pathetic sadness on her face lent to it an altogether new beauty. It was hardly possible to see that look of intense loneliness, of hidden pain and regret, and not desire to pass beyond the conventionalities that condemn people to the superficial intercourse which has value neither for him who gives nor for him who receives.

In answer to Genevieve's invitation for to-day Miss Richmond had written a brief note, asking if she might leave the matter undecided. She would have been glad to go, yet she dreaded going; and when the day came her dread was greater than her desire. 'They may forgive,' she said to herself; 'they may even forget, but I cannot—I would not if I could forget. . . . If, as George Kirkoswald says, there is any hope for me, it can only come by ceaselessly remembering.'

Genevieve was sorry, the first time she went to Yarrell, to find that Miss Richmond was not at home. 'She had gone up to the moor,' Kendle said; and George Kirkoswald and his wife went home by another way.

Is this the end of any history touched upon here? All lives have a history, and it does not need effective incident to make a true human story interesting. How very interesting any tale is that is told simply and openly, and not by parables! But it is expedient that the truth should be veiled at times. We throw a veil over the very life we are living, as over a statue or a picture that is not completed. It is Death who comes and gives the finishing touches, and leaves the completed work all rounded, and seemly, and intelligible.

At Usselby Hall it is well understood that life has only just

begun. The time to understand this fully is acknowledged always to be the present time, and just now that is the month of May. The very birds comprehend it—the thrush and the black-bird, the chaffinch and the warbling willow wren. And the trees attest it—the golden sycamore that shines in the morning sun like the burning bush on Mount Horeb, the fringed and tasselled larches, the alder with its soft display of tiny flowers and downward-dropping leaves. The fruit-trees flush to crimson for the coming gladness of the land, and yet again the wild-flowers dance in the green meadows where the lark drops suddenly down to a restful hidden silence, like a poet seeking seclusion while the world praises his latest song.

‘This is the kind of morning to feel one’s life in all its fulness,’ George Kirkoswald says. He is walking up and down the terrace in front of the house, and he is speaking to his wife, who is by his side. She is wearing a white morning dress, her golden hair catches the sunshine, her dark beautiful eyes are full of life’s gladness and holiness.

‘Yes,’ she replies; ‘I have just been wondering over the fulness of life, wondering if the next two-and-twenty years could possibly be so full of experience as the two-and-twenty that are gone. I feel rather like the philosopher—was it not Mill?—who grieved lest it should some day be discovered that there could be no new combinations of musical sound.’

‘I do not know enough of music to be able to set a philosopher’s fears to rest on that point,’ George answers, ‘but I do know something of human life; and I know that life, if it be lived with any truth and earnestness, can never fail to present to him who lives it enough of freshness and vitality to make it worth living. If a man would live fully, he must live deeply. It seems to me that the fault of the day is the fear of going below the surface. The upheaval will come from below, and it will come before long if oil be not poured upon the troubled waters presently. Even in these remote districts the consciousness of dissatisfied—I may almost say outraged—humanity is awakening. And we are altogether blind—blind and deaf. It is neither our money nor our lands that the people desire. The majority of the suffering poor would recoil from the idea of taking by violence the things that

justly belong to others. It is not our possessions that they crave : it is our due sympathy, our thought for their welfare, our goodwill, our care for their lives, our human and Christian loving-kindness. Had we but ever so faintly apprehended that Sermon on the Mount, there had not been that dread among Christian nations which is rising and gathering now. . . . If we can bring but a stone to repair the ancient pathways, in God's name let us bring it. So we shall find our life here, and even so we may trust its Hereafter.'

THE END.